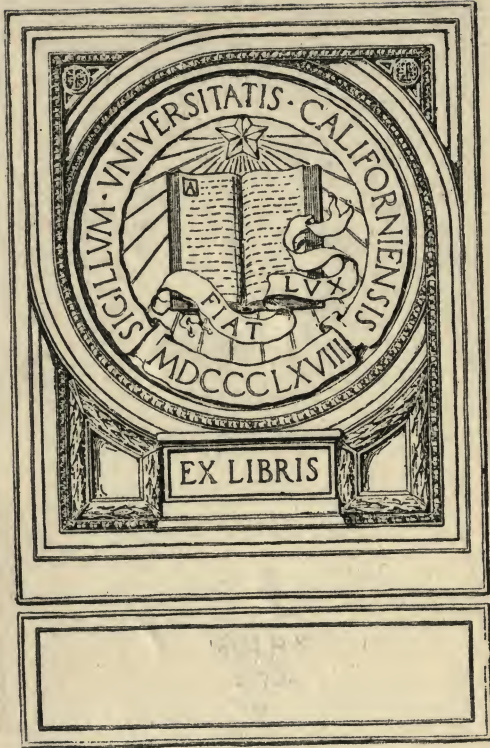


*A* REPORTER *at*  
ARMAGEDDON

▼ WILL IRWIN ▼



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**A REPORTER  
AT ARMAGEDDON**



# A REPORTER AT ARMAGEDDON

LETTERS FROM THE FRONT AND  
BEHIND THE LINES OF THE GREAT WAR

BY

WILL IRWIN

AUTHOR OF "MEN, WOMEN AND WAR,"

"THE SPLENDID STORY OF YPRES," "THE LATIN AT WAR," ETC.



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# A REPORTER AT ARMAGEDDON

## CHAPTER I

### GETTING OVER

AT SEA,  
Saturday Evening, March 24, 1917.

TO-NIGHT this little Spanish jitney steamer is eleven days from New York and twelve hours—perhaps—from her home port of Cadiz, just outside of the Strait of Gibraltar. Since we passed the Azores three days ago we have been steering a curved course; but for that we should have reached port already. Approaching the Strait of Gibraltar is dangerous just now, even for a strictly neutral ship. Between the Pillars of Hercules the German mine-laying submarines are busy, and the currents carry the mines out into the broad Atlantic. For that reason we steered north; and just after sunset this evening a flashing light announced our approach to the Spanish Coast. We have been hugging the three-mile limit ever since, and across the severe shore, which we can make out in the beams of a new moon, comes the distant gleam of town lights. The ship's rumors, which

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always break out on the last night of these war-time journeys, have been especially prevalent and startling this evening. One has it that we shall be stopped by a French cruiser early to-morrow morning and searched for German subjects. It is said also that the captain has advised all subjects of belligerent countries to disembark at Cadiz, outside the Strait, instead of trying the further course to Barcelona, within the troubled Mediterranean. Some of the belligerents are planning to sit up all night—for in spite of the German announcement that the Spanish coast is not blockaded for neutral vessels no one seems to put much faith in the self-control of a German submarine commander confronted with a fat prize.

This has been a queer voyage. I have crossed to Europe five times since the beginning of the war, and each time I have seen the business of sea travel grow less and less luxurious. Now we are down to primitive necessity—the travel of forty years ago. To begin with the ship, she was Clyde-built in 1891, before the era of ocean greyhounds and floating hotels. Her certificate of inspection shows that she registers less than six thousand tons; which puts her, on the standards of 1914, in the class of coasters. She is probably the smallest craft that dares to carry first-cabin passengers across the Atlantic in these times.

Four days ago we had a fine following wind, whereupon our merry Spanish crew—great singers and dancers—rigged a lateen sail on the fore-



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mast, which added thirty miles or so to the day's run. It recalled the early era of steam power in the United States Navy, when standing orders forced commanders to use sails whenever possible, and admirals used to be reprimanded for burning coal when the wind would serve just as well.

She is a steady old tub, rolling and pitching far less than most ships of four times her tonnage—and that lets her out. At some time in her past history, I take it, she was refitted with secondhand furnishings torn out of dismantled ships; for no two cabin washstands are of the same pattern. Most of the washstands, indeed, function no longer, as the French express it. Our tap is hopelessly out of order, and we pour our water from a can resembling a garden watering-pot. Few of the Americans, Englishmen, Frenchmen, Japanese, Rumanians, Russians, Dutchmen and Italians making this journey speak Spanish. We had thought that French, the universal language of European travel, would carry us through. But not a single servant of the boat has either French or English, and only one of the officers. The English-Spanish pocket dictionaries aboard are passing from hand to hand while we learn that dinner is "*comida*" and that sheets are "*sábanas*." For the rest we are down to the language of gesture.

To do the old tub justice, the food is passable. However, the American abroad refuses to recognize as coffee any mixture or brew except his own.

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In two years and a half of the war I have found only two places that served coffee measuring up to our standards. One was a very humble café at Lyons, and the other an equally modest establishment in Udine. Here, I have had luck again. Our star passenger this trip is the Reliever of Belgium, returning to wind up, before the war breaks on us, that institution which has been America's most glorious work of war—so far. He is a little disgusted because a cautious board of directors persuaded him to take this safe route instead of the more dangerous one, via British passenger ship, from New York to Liverpool. He is used by this time to dodging explosives. He has crossed from England to Belgium on an average of once every six weeks since the first October of the war. The Dutch company on whose packets he used to sail has lost six out of seven vessels so far through floating mines; and twice his ship has been captured and searched by German torpedo fleets.

His cautious directors took no chances on the Friend of the Hungry going hungry himself. They loaded his cabin with fresh fruit, fresh eggs and—most useful of all—a complete coffee-making outfit, including ground Java and Mocha, canned heat and fresh cream. So every morning he and I have risen at our native farmer hour and made real coffee for ourselves and for whatever guests cared to breakfast before eight. The cream lasted only three days. We had tried to put it in

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the ice box, but the head steward, interviewed through an obliging Spaniard, replied that he had a very peculiar ice box. While on the subject of eating and drinking and quarters, let me mention that I paid four hundred and forty-two dollars and fifty cents for a cabin on the main deck for myself and my wife. That sum, in any March before the war, would have secured us a suite on a six-day boat. Still, the assurance of comparative safety is worth the price.

The passenger list is entertaining to the point of romance. Except for the Spaniards, it is a kind of journey of desperation for most of us. There are two or three American business men. One is going over to sell steel cars to the Italian Government—he has already filled up the Russian roads to the point of saturation. By contrast, another, bound also for Italy, will buy maraschino cherries for the New York cocktail market. A rosy-cheeked Dutchman and his plump, handsome wife found themselves in America when the submarine proclamation stopped all passenger traffic with Holland. They had left their children in Holland. They are returning via Spain, France, the Channel, England, and the Channel again. Only we who have encountered the official restrictions on travel know what our friends from Holland must endure in the next fortnight.

She whom we call to her face the Beautiful Wop joins us sometimes at breakfast—a young, pretty



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and alive Italian-American, by profession a costume buyer. This is her sixth trip over since the war, though she has gone previously via Bordeaux. Only two days before our sailing did she decide to make this voyage, and get out a last consignment of Paris fashions before the entrance of the United States should make shipments still more precarious. The second day out she found on board her Dearest Rival—on the same mission!

With her come to breakfast the Relief Girl, who has been learning stenography in order to act as secretary to a society for the relief of the French wounded, and "Mr. Y. M. C. A.," whose nickname explains his mission. He will take charge of a recreation tent in the war zone—almost all of the British Y. M. C. A. secretaries are mobilized.

A pleasant little Italian attorney, who speaks all the languages current on board, has been for a year on a special commercial mission to the United States. A month from now he will be wearing the olive-gray and fighting with the Third Alpini among the peaks. An ex-football player of Princeton is going over to London to report to the head office of his banking firm; thence he passes on to a permanent station in India. He is escorting his sister, who will, upon arrival, marry an English naval captain. War is war, and a sailor of His Majesty's navy on active service cannot cross the seas for his bride!

Then there is the Newspaper Enterprise Asso-

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ciation man, going to have his first shot at reporting the war and considerably excited over the prospect. He is walking the deck with an American who will introduce to Spain a new compact talking machine. Ship's orchestras are numbered with the things of that dead past before the war; but every fine afternoon he has given a concert on deck with his bijou machine. Other persons worthy of mention include the remains of the Russian Ballet—most of that troupe sailed two weeks ahead of us—and a French art dealer, member of a famous Franco-American banking family, who has been in America disposing of some great French paintings, sold because of the war.

The sportively inclined among the Latin element are at this moment drinking champagne on deck. The Spanish have been enjoying themselves in their own way. First and last, they have found means to play every known parlor game, from bridge, chess and poker down to keno. We had scarcely passed the Statue of Liberty before they opened a lottery. This afternoon the drawing was held on deck, amidst unprecedented excitement. A half an hour later what looked like a terrible row broke out—five plump, dark gentlemen shoving their fingers under one another's noses, waving their palms before one another's faces, stamping and talking like the exhaust of an automobile. The Italian attorney passed just then. "What is this all about?" I asked. He listened a moment. "They are arguing over a point



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in philology!" he replied. With the Spanish, something is doing every moment. Most of the men, I find, are commercial travelers from Barcelona, who have been selling Spanish goods in New York.

However, there are romantic exceptions. A tall and exceptionally dark person in a frock coat turns out to be a fortune teller from Yucatan. He has read the palms of all the Spanish women on deck, looking soulfully into their eyes as he plied his art. A short and plump person in a mantilla, who sits all day on deck knitting without ever raising her eyes, is his Mexican wife. Rumor has it that she is a fabulously rich heiress. There was a scramble for cabins just before we sailed, and late comers had to take what they could get. In consequence, she is quartered separately from her husband with three American women. Night before last she failed to show up in her cabin. Investigation revealed that she had fallen asleep on a bench in the hall and slept there all night in her peaceful Indian fashion. A chatty and sociable Dominican nun and her charge, a pretty little girl of eleven years, give a lively note to the Spanish colony. This morning the girl appeared with a doll as big as herself. The Spanish sports were drinking sherry on deck. They lured the doll from her and pretended to get it drunk—to the scandal of the little mother.

However, the great high light of this trip is Tortola—Tortola Valencia, the Spanish dancer—

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just back from a trip to South America, where, according to her manager, the enthusiastic inhabitants unharnessed the horses from her carriage and dragged her to the hotel by hand. He further informs us that she is the greatest artist of the dance ever born and the greatest that can ever possibly be born. I learn from persons less interested that she is supreme in her department—interpretative dancing—on the Spanish stage. I despair of describing how beautiful Tortola is; it would take a woman to do that. She begins, as most beauties do not, with a correct background of bony structure. The angle of her jaws, the curve of her nose, the sweep of her ample eye-socket are all essentially comely. On that background are built a smooth, creamy complexion, a set of white teeth firm yet fine, slimly arched eyebrows, and a pair of great black eyes all fire, intelligence and emotion. Her straight hair makes midnight look like dawn. Her dress is startling, to put the matter mildly; it runs to old-portrait effects. She wears two pendent sapphire earrings as big as pigeon's eggs, a great sapphire finger-ring to match, and a half a dozen other rings, emerald or diamond, none of which scores less than five carats in weight. On cold days, when she has to don her gloves for warmth, she takes off her largest rings, deposits them in her lap, draws on her gloves, and replaces the rings carefully outside.

From the very moment when she landed on deck

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she was surrounded by an admiring, solicitous, respectful court of Spanish men. It became our game to count them. There were never less than four, and one fine evening the score reached eleven—not including the infatuated deck hand. A handsome lad who looks in his blue sailor uniform as though made up for romantic opera, he always finds business in the background, whence he devours her with his eyes. From the forward deck a set of portholes look down into the dining saloon. One evening, having finished dinner, I strolled out on deck. The infatuated deck hand, holding the ship's cat in his arms, lay stretched out at full length, his face glued to a porthole. He was regarding Tortola, where she sat holding her court.

Only three days ago did we learn that she speaks perfect English—though a native of Seville she was educated in an English convent. After which the American element, including our women—nothing fascinates other women like a beauty—joined her court. As we might have expected from her ample forehead and the light in her eye, she has real intelligence. Her comments on art—not only her own, but all art from painting to music—were both wise and witty. Ship life was a bit hard on her abounding energies, and when she grew bored she used to dance with the upper part of her body, while the members usually associated with her art remained immobile under about five thousand dollars' worth of sealskin coat.



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Twenty varieties of Spanish dances, Hindu dances, snake dances, her own interpretative dances of the Peer Gynt suite—she did them all with arms and torso and expression. “Have you learned the Hawaiian dances in your travels?” asked an American during one of these performances. “I do not learn, I create!” replied Tortola Valencia.

Finally, there is the Padre, who walks gravely on deck every day reading his book of hours. One Sunday and two major saints’ days have occurred since we cast off into the Sea of Submarines. On these occasions, the sea being smooth, he has set up an altar on deck and celebrated Mass with two little apprentices in sailor uniforms as acolytes, and with the ship’s officers, arranged according to their rank, in front of the congregation.

Meantime, the face of the world has changed. The revolution in Russia, for which the liberals of the world have been waiting and hoping and praying all my lifetime—it has burst suddenly and dramatically. The manner in which the news came to us was maddening. Fortunately we have had a wireless bulletin every day, at first in English from Arlington, then in Spanish from passing vessels, finally in French from the Eiffel Tower. Three days out came the dramatic announcement, far too brief, simply that the troops in favor of revolution had beaten those opposed to it and occupied Petrograd. Next day the purser posted a most confusing dispatch. The Grand Duke Michael was at the head of the provisional govern-

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ment; the government was restoring order and attending to the distribution of food; and finally the sinister sentence in Spanish: "The revolution has been entirely unfruitful." How could it have been, with a provisional government in control? Yet there stood that statement; and it was the last we heard of the Russian Revolution for six days, during which the Art Dealer, the Reliever of Belgium and I, the three persons aboard who had followed the war most closely, walked the deck and indulged in conjecture. We all understood the situation in its full importance: If that revolution succeeded, it meant that Russia would go on with the war; if it failed, it meant that Germany would pull off a separate peace.

Daily the bulletins gave us fragments of news from America and the Western Front; one day they even recorded that three American ships had been sunk by submarines, rendering our certain entrance into this war doubly certain. But no mention of Russia.

"It's the biggest thing for us since the Declaration of Independence," said the Reliever of Belgium. "A liberal Russia will be our friend; an autocratic Russia—" He had no need to finish the sentence.

"It's one of the events in Jewish history," said the Art Dealer, who is a Jew. "We have hated Russia with cause; we can be her friends now."

And no news! No news! After four days the wireless did another maddening thing. Without



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preliminary warning it flashed the announcement that French cavalry had ridden through to Noyon, had been acclaimed by the populace. What was this? The long-hoped-for break of the great line or a voluntary retirement? We are in doubt on that point even yet, though we have talked of little else for three days. But day before yesterday Russian news came at last—the abdication of the Czar, the recognition of the new government by France, Great Britain and the United States, the loyalty of the army. We lifted up our voices and cheered.

As I write this in the ship's cabin, with the Spanish sports still drinking on deck and warm puffs of land air coming from the dim coast, Tortola enters. An Englishman breaks to her news of the latest ship's rumor—that we will be stopped and searched personally at four o'clock in the morning by a French ship.

“Heavens! And Frenchmen!” says Tortola. “I must not put cold cream on my face to-night. I could not have them find me ugly!”

ON THE DOCK, CADIZ,  
Sunday Morning, March 25th.

Of course the French cruiser that was to search us failed to show up. The events prophesied by ship's rumor in these troublous times never come off. Things happen, but not the things foretold by the man who had it from the assistant purser, who had it from the captain, who got it straight by

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wireless. On the tender we found a Rumanian diplomat, come to take his brother by automobile to Madrid. He told us the best—that the Russian Revolution is a permanent camp; but he modified his good news by announcing that the action about Noyon looked like a voluntary retirement. We are waiting here for the baggage to come off, and catching through the windows of the waiting-room alluring glimpses of women going to church in mantillas.

This out-of-the-way port is one of the most attractive in the world. Above a turquoise-blue harbor it rises in vistas of tall white houses, topped with quaint watch-towers and shot with Moorish-looking arches—in fact, from the sea it looks like a great world's fair a little shaken down with age. Here is much of the story of the vanished glory of Spain. For Cadiz, in the days of Queen Elizabeth, was the port where the English admirals used to practice the merry sport of scorching the Spanish king's beard. In 1596, the guidebooks tell us, they burned and sacked the town. Later the Spanish treasure ships from South America sailed for Cadiz; and the British admirals used to wait outside and take the treasure away. Finally, after centuries, the town built up a prosperous trade with the Spanish colonies, especially Cuba. When we finished the Spanish War there were no Spanish colonies to speak of.

These reflections are prompted by the adventures of some of my fellow passengers, who have

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been uptown trying to exchange their American money for Spanish—the purser of our boat would make no exchange. It is Sunday and the banks are closed. They have paid six or seven different rates of exchange, all ruinous. Some of them have been short-changed into the bargain. Cadiz, I take it, is getting back at us.

MADRID, Tuesday, March 27th.

Yesterday was passport day, with trouble enough for my fellow travelers. The Entente Allies are growing very cautious about letting any one enter from Spain; in fact, they are discouraging all travel. If you wish to enter France from the United States via Spain, you must have your passport viséed first by a French consul in the United States, to prove that you are considered an innocent and worthy person in your own country. Then you must present yourself to the French consul here. He makes you wait for three days while he investigates you by telegraph. The only exception to this rule is a person on government business. It is left to Mr. Willard, our ambassador, to say who is and who is not on government business; and he interprets the regulation strictly. Journalists, for example, do not come under the exception. The Newspaper Enterprise Association man must wait his three days, and so must I, when I get ready to leave.

In the lobby this afternoon I observed the Beautiful Wop weeping softly on one bench, while the



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wife of the Dutchman, going home via Spain, sat across from her absolutely worn out with grief. She had cause to cry, poor thing. She had accompanied her husband on his business trip to America last winter, leaving her children at home in Rotterdam. They were returning on a Dutch steamer, when the Germans issued their submarine order. The Dutch steamer, though near Falmouth at the time, turned back to New York. So they tried it again via Spain. The British, French and Dutch consuls all tell them the same story. There is no passenger traffic between England and Holland now; even if they reached England they could not get home. So what is the use of giving them the right to travel across France to England, in a day when every civilian passenger costs just so much coal? They must either return to America or stay in Spain.

The Beautiful Wop's position is less tragic but still irritating. It illustrates the consequences, in these days, of a small irregularity in one's papers. She sailed on two days' notice. When she got her passport some mistaken functionary informed her that a French visé in the United States was a mere formality and wholly unnecessary. The French consul in Madrid would attend to everything. She found that it was very necessary—indispensable, in fact. The French consul here, under his orders, can do nothing until he telegraphs to the United States and has her case investigated. In these days of cable censorship it takes an ordinary

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civilian telegram nearly a week to go from Madrid to New York. The consul can get an exchange of official telegrams in from four to ten days, but the time the consul in New York will take to investigate is an uncertain quantity. Here it is Tuesday, and the openings of the summer styles begin next Sunday! In the meantime, her rival, better advised, will get her permission to travel and be on her way Friday.

Scarcely had I finished listening to their troubles, when I found the girl who is to marry the British naval captain having tea with her brother and looking rather serious. It appears that her business in England does not come under the regulations. They are very sorry at the British consulate; a journey to marry one of His Majesty's navy is no excuse.

The Reliever of Belgium went through last night; his is public business. He did have a little trouble, however, about his secretary. The new regulations specify that no citizen of the Allied countries shall be allowed to travel with a secretary; one must dispense with that luxury in wartime. However, he is not yet a belligerent; and, moreover, his situation is semidiplomatic. So the secretary also goes through.

The God of the famished go with him! He is the biggest human phenomenon brought out of America by this war, and the Commission for Relief in Belgium has been our noblest work so far.

Later: I have just met the Engaged Girl, all

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trousseau and smiles. The British have informed her, with the gruffness which a Briton uses to conceal a kindly deed, that they have found a rule covering her case. It is something about the wives of officers, which can be stretched to include the wife-to-be of an officer. So she is going straight through to-morrow. She says that she felt they'd do it, and never worried for a minute. All the world loves a lover, even in war!



## CHAPTER II

### A BEAUTY SHOW

MADRID, Thursday, March 29th.

FASHIONS in stage character change. Up to the beginning of the war the villain of British melodrama was usually a Frenchman or an Italian. The Entente Cordiale and the entrance of Italy on the side of Britain stopped all that. At present he is either a German or a Spaniard. The American, now—Europe used to refuse to take him seriously enough to make him a villain. He was usually the low-comedy relief, or at most the clever friend of the persecuted hero. But yesterday, in the café and cabaret which this hotel runs in its basement, I met face to face on the movie screen an American villainess of the deepest dye.

Since the war, it appears, Spain has been establishing a film industry of her own, producing with native actors in the clear airs of the Mediterranean Coast. This native five-reel thriller set forth the adventures of The Black Captain.

The first reel was set in Madrid; and it introduced Miss Arabella, American heiress of a blond beauty and a black heart. The count falls in love with her. By her wiles, and for no reason except

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inherent racial wickedness, she sets him against his best friend. They fight a duel with swords, and the count kills his friend. The reel ends with the broken-hearted count taking a transatlantic liner to America. When we see him again he is the Black Captain, leader of a bandit band in the Far West. After which Miss Arabella is reintroduced with the title: "The Wicked American Woman Goes to Take Charge of her Vast Inherited Estates in the West." There follow three reels of intense action. I take it that there is no movie Board of Censors in Spain. When the Black Captain fights he pulls out two guns and piles up his dead in full view of the audience. The West would admire the realism of this film. The cowboys ride in English pad saddles; they wear handkerchiefs bound round their heads, tight riding breeches, and sashes bristling with knives. The Black Captain is clad in velveteen, and when he gets ready to ride in a pursuit his servant-cowboy hands him a pair of white gloves and a riding-crop. The heart of the villainess grows blacker with each reel. She is especially severe on the beautiful Spanish ward of the Black Captain, whom she ties to a stake in the rising tide, shuts up in a burning house, and hangs over a precipice. At one time the Black Captain catches her and brands her with a hot iron between the shoulder blades—this also in full view of the audience. Finally the villainess, Miss Arabella, fleeing from his vengeance in an automobile, goes over

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a cliff into the sea, and the Black Captain gathers his rescued ward into his arms as the lights go up.

That great café, an institution of this town, is packed every afternoon and evening, though Lent is drawing to its somber close, though perplexities are gathering fast about the government, though there are murmurs everywhere of a general strike against the high cost of living. And yet the effects of the war are visible even to the casual eye. It is a different city from the one I saw two years ago, when Armageddon was young and we talked of peace within a year. To begin with, I haven't been warm since I left Cadiz—I am writing this in an ulster. Madrid stands on a plateau, with a range of snow-clad mountains in the distance. Its site resembles that of Denver, at a lesser altitude. The climate runs to extremes, and only in mid-summer, when a tropical sun beats down, is the air ever quite free from chill. So the people of Madrid heat their houses with stoves and furnaces, American-fashion. Now the country has run out of coal. Its own great coal seams to the north have never been worked up to the domestic demand; it has depended on the Cardiff mines, a matter of sea transport. Cardiff is not shipping coal now to neutral countries. The price of coal has risen to thirty and forty dollars a ton—when it can be had. For the past two days we have had no artificial heat in this hotel, one of the best two in Madrid. When I complained the management told me that they were very sorry; they



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really expected a little coal within two or three days. In the meantime, they had all they could do to find enough for cooking; if this kept on they would have to close the grill. Madrid is blue-nosed, shivering.

Ten or fifteen years ago, before we opened our era of great building expansion, there was one hotel in every American town about which local life centered—the Palace in San Francisco, the Auditorium Annex in Chicago, the St. Charles in New Orleans and the Waldorf-Astoria in New York. This is such a hotel; the life of the Iberian Peninsula drifts in a steady current through its lobbies. There is now an undercurrent of melodrama. I walked from the tea room to the bar yesterday with a man who knows Madrid, and all the way he talked into my ear like this:

“That’s a German agent. He does anything that comes to his hand—mostly propaganda. Look out for him, my boy, he’s probably watching you. That woman—the pretty one there—is an Austrian. She lived in England the first two years of the war, because she had the protection of a nobleman. But she had to get out last summer. No, there’s nothing wrong with her. She’s been in England long enough to feel English; but she never got naturalized, so she had to go. If that fellow in the green hat makes up to you, keep your fingers crossed. He talks perfect American and claims to be a citizen, but I hear that the Embassy has refused him a passport. They say he is a de-

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serter from the United States Army, and that he has been doing secret-service work here for the Germans—some say that he has an iron cross. He seems to have no occupation, and he lives high. You're looking out for your passports, aren't you? Half the secret agents in Madrid are trying to steal them."

Looking out for my passports! The specter of a lost passport sits on my pillow in this strange neutral country of intrigues; for you might as well be dead as without papers. And American passports have a high market value—the latest quotation, they tell me, is seven thousand pesetas, or about fifteen hundred dollars. They are—or have been—useful for spying purposes. That, however, is not the main use. Since the beginning of the war Spain has been as a city of refuge for the Germans. There were about seven thousand of them in the whole kingdom before the war; now there are eighty thousand, if you include a body of soldiers who found their way into the Spanish-African colonies from the Kameruns, and were interned.

The question the outsider asks is how they got here. Some, it appears, fled from the southern part of France in the first week of the war, when the French system was not working so well as it does now. Many more escaped from the German colonies in Africa and made their way across the Mediterranean by trick, fraud and device. Still others have managed to cross from the United

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States. Now these people are virtually prisoners in Spain. The Allies hold the open seas, and have the power, if they will, to search Spanish vessels for enemy subjects. To prevent this annoyance, the Spanish have agreed with the British not to give passage out of the country to Germans or Austrians. An American passport is received without question by the authorities at the Spanish ports; and the high prices are offered by Germans who have pressing business in America. Within the past month three passports have been stolen in this city.

One has an uncomfortable feeling that he is being watched—by both sides. The Germans want to know what you are doing here; the Allies want to satisfy themselves, before you cross the line into France, that you are what you assume to be, and not a German agent who has dropped off in Spain to report. I have marked often, and in diverse parts of the city, a small blondish gentleman of uncertain nationality hanging carelessly about in my vicinity. He is probably my pet spy.

I was in Madrid the last time during the late summer of 1915. Then the German element was much more in evidence than at present. In all the cafés and the dining rooms of the more expensive hotels big, blond men, often displaying sword cuts on their cheeks, laughed and drank and chatted in gutturals. Whenever Germany had a military victory—which happened only too often in those days—they gave a banquet at this hotel. It was



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on one of those occasions that the head waiter, who was an Italian, lost his job. Unable to endure the speeches, which were especially severe on Italy, he walked along the balcony over the toastmaster's head and dropped therefrom a large sheaf of Allied flags. Now one sees a tableful of Germans here and there at the best cafés; but they are uncommon enough to attract attention.

They are here; but one must look for them in the small and inexpensive restaurants frequented by bull-fighters, peasants and the cheaper sports. For there are hard times just now in the German colony.

MADRID, Palm Sunday, April 1st.

The race between the Beautiful Wop and her Dearest Rival to be first at the Paris openings is not over yet. When the Beautiful Wop found that she could not cross the border because she had no visé from the French consul in New York, she telegraphed to the consul and her people asking for a telegraphic visé. That takes time nowadays—messages go by French cable and must be censored. The minimum allowance is three days. The quickest way to telegraph to New York from Madrid is to send the message to Berlin by wireless and have it relayed by wireless again. Such messages often go through in twenty-four hours. But, of course, this method is impossible to a friend of the Allies, or to one who is doing business with the Allied governments. Since last

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Tuesday, when she sent her telegrams, she has been going through the dreary business of waiting and trying to keep a stiff upper lip. In the meantime, the Dearest Rival sailed through last Friday night with flying colors.

This morning she reappeared in Madrid. She had been refused admittance to France. Without explanation, she was advised to return to Madrid to see her diplomatic representatives. She went back all the more quietly because she had been keeping a worrisome secret for a week and understood in her heart what was the matter. And this afternoon the French consul, found working in his office on his day off, confirmed her suspicions:

On our boat coming over was a quiet young woman who wore a diamond solitaire on the third finger of her left hand. She said that she was going to Seville to live. She and the Dearest Rival fell together and grew friendly. The quiet young woman confided to her new friend a thrilling secret: She was going over to Seville to marry a young man, a foreign resident of Spain, whose business kept him from traveling. For decency's sake he was to meet her at the train with the priest and the license. As they got thicker, the quiet young woman asked her if she wouldn't stop off and be a witness—it made one feel more at home to have one's own countrywoman at the ceremony. What woman could have resisted? The Dearest Rival made arrangements to stay over at

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Seville for the night, and travel on to Madrid in the morning.

They were about to range themselves before the altar, when the Dearest Rival learned one small but significant fact hitherto concealed from her: The bridegroom was a German! She did exactly what any other decent person would have done—went through with the affair courteously. She attended the supper afterward, and got out of Seville on the first train next morning. But some one, as she feared, had kept tabs on the affair and reported it to the French.

It is easy for the people of a country just entering this war—or newly in it, as the case may be—to criticize the French for overseverity in a case like this. But we who have known this war from the beginning, and understand the extraordinary subtlety of the spy game as played by the Germanic powers, do not blame any Allied government for taking no chances whatever. And if the French are severe they are also fair-minded. Doubtless when she has proven her record and intentions she will pass. But it will take time, and betting at present is on the Beautiful Wop!

MADRID, Holy Thursday, April 5th.

One thing allures me about Madrid: It is the only large capital of Western Europe that dares to be itself. Brussels and Berlin, Paris and Vienna, London and Stockholm, all are a bit stand-



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ardized. The women wear Paris fashions, the men London clothes. There are the same old cafés, the same old uniformed orchestras, the same old grand-opera houses, the same old everything. No sooner does a fashion in public living start in Paris than it is copied somberly in London, strenuously in Berlin—where the specialty is being gay with your teeth clenched—merrily in Vienna and decorously in Stockholm. At least it was so before the war.

But Madrid, even at the very first glance, is itself. Half of the women, no matter how well dressed or how ill dressed otherwise, drape over their heads that bit of lace known to the language of Spain and Romance as the mantilla. It is the only correct thing for church; and a visit to church is part of the day's routine for every conservative Spanish woman. On the first hot day, out will come the pictured fans with which they guard their eyes from the brilliant sun of the Castilian plateau. Only once or twice on this visit have I seen an automobile truck. The work is all done by great, cream-colored Spanish oxen with immense horns, or by teams of two mules and a donkey, hitched tandem, the little burro proudly leading his greater and humbler cousins. The bridles and neck yokes of half these teams are decorated with woolen pompons—red or blue or yellow for carriers of general merchandise, black for coal carts. These Spanish mules are beautiful animals; the aristocrats among them—sorrels with glossy skins, fine-

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drawn ears, and hoofs manicured like mirrors—draw the carriages of the higher clergy.

The vegetables all come to the door on donkey-back. The huckster slings four or five wide panniers across his fireless steed, fills them to running over with lettuce, carrots, onions, and radishes, and seats himself cross-legged on top of the pile. The general effect is an inverted pyramid, the apex the little feet of the burro. So milk is delivered in two great egg-shaped cans, also on each side of the patient ass. The milkman, his measure slung across his back, sits just over the donkey's shoulders. Often the little dog that guards the milk while he is making the deliveries perches himself on the lid of one of the cans. Every day at sunset there move down the Prado—the Upper Fifth Avenue, the Euclid Avenue, the Van Ness Avenue, of Madrid—herds of goats, driven by a rough-looking herder or an old woman with a red handkerchief bound round her head. They pass from door to door; and the goats are milked to the proper measure in the presence of young mothers who are bringing up delicate children.

Madrid is never more itself than in Holy Week. Spain is the most profoundly religious nation of Western Europe, and the church is established by law. Yesterday the few cabarets, *pelota* courts and cinemas which had kept open during the early part of the week were closed by order of the public authorities. This morning every shop closed, and all traffic, except that absolutely necessary to



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the life of the town, halted. On the Puerta del Sol, heart of the town, and the Calle de Alcalá, its busiest thoroughfare, not a wheel turned.

Holy Thursday is observed throughout the Catholic world by visits to churches. This introduces the prettiest custom of Madrid. Ordinarily the women wear the "low mantilla." The comb beneath it is small. The mantilla appears merely as a bit of lace thrown over the head. But on Holy Thursday and Good Friday the Spanish woman dresses her hair as she does for festal occasions. She builds it high and finishes it with a great comb, as much as ten inches high from teeth to tip. And over it she drapes a mantilla, the front ruffle of which frames her face, and the back ruffle, making a soft cascade over her shoulders, reaches often to her knees. Sometimes she mounds in front of the comb a bank of red carnations; and sometimes she has just one red blossom above her ear.

On Good Friday the mantillas must all be black; but to-day the white mantilla is allowed to those whom it becomes. The richer women costume themselves all in tight-fitting black, with high-heeled patent-leather shoes on their little Spanish feet. The others throw the finishing touch of the mantilla over whatever costume they happen to own; and occasionally you see a priceless piece of old lace (an heirloom, doubtless) covering a rather shabby and humble dress.

As this afternoon wore on, the crowd of pilgrims and sight-seers in the Calle de Alcalá grew so thick

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that it filled not only the sidewalk but the broad roadway. So it paraded slowly, rather quiet and decorous in respect for the day, but all eyes nevertheless. Above everything, taller than the head of the tallest Spaniard, rose the soft black and white peaks of the mantillas. The beauty of the Spanish woman has not been overpraised. It is, in fact, an unusually good-looking race. The very gnarled faces of the peasants have a rugged interest. There is not the same variety of beauty which one sees in San Francisco—the women are all of the same soft-eyed, subtly curved, gently alluring type—but still it seemed to me the finest beauty show of pretty women I had ever seen in any land.

It took the shrewd feminine observation of the lady who observed it with me—and she yields to none in admiration of the Spanish type—to point out that some of it was stage effect. That fall of soft lace is the becoming frame for those olive-tinted, soft-eyed faces.

MADRID, Saturday Evening, April 7th.

On returning to the hotel last night I saw the Beautiful Wop running toward me, and knew before she came within hailing distance that she had her visé at last. The news had arrived in the afternoon, and she was off to Paris by the ten-twenty train. The Dearest Rival, it appears, persuaded the French yesterday that one wedding does not make a war, and she too is off to-night. So the race for the fashions turned out a tie after all.

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This morning I spelled out from *La Correspondencia* the vital news for us. The House has passed the declaration of war; the die is cast. The English banker, down here on a munitions deal, came up to me as I hurried to my room, shook me by the hand, and solemnly called me "ally"! It has been so long in coming and so long a certainty that it brought no shock. I ought to be divided between sorrow for what we must face and solemn joy that we have taken the right path. But the only feeling in me, here in a land remote both from home and from the war, is simply a great wave of homesickness.

## CHAPTER III

### FRANCE AGAIN!

PARIS, April 20th.

THE journey from Madrid to Paris is rather easy, as European travel goes nowadays. Certain points in France that were only five hours from Paris before the war are now twenty-four hours away, even with good luck. But you leave Madrid at ten o'clock Monday evening and, unless you strike trouble at the border, you reach Paris in time for breakfast on Wednesday—two nights and a day. There are *wagons-lits*, or sleeping cars, for both nights—if you can get a berth. Reservations on the Spanish train, as far as the border, are easy. The second night comes harder. Though I applied for reservations on the French section six days in advance, I was told the train had been sold out for a week.

As it turned out, we had at least a place to lie down; for at about eleven o'clock the woman train porter entered the first-class compartment of the day coach, where we were trying to make ourselves comfortable for the night, with the news that we might have two *couchettes* forward. I did not know exactly what a *couchette* was; but I followed.



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On European railroads, as the untraveled American may not know, the sleeping car is a thing separate from the day coach. When the management thinks it is time for the passengers to go to bed, *wagons-lits* are switched on to the train and the passengers are transferred from the day coach. These sleeping cars are divided into tiny compartments, each with two beds. It appeared that, in the present condition of things, the sleeping cars are short of bed linen. The portress had a compartment without sheets or blankets; but we might lie down on the bare berths. In our clothes, and covered with fur coats against the cold of this villainously raw spring, we passed a comfortable night, as nights go in wartime travel.

That examination at the border, which all aliens going from spy-ridden Spain to rightfully suspicious France dread so much, turned out in my case to be foolishly easy. Every one passing through Spain is watched, I take it; and whoever watched me must have noted that I had no German acquaintance. The inspectors studied my passport for a minute, took down its date and made me lift my hat to see whether I resembled my passport photograph; a business-like official consulted a card index—and I was loose in France, free to roam through a little town which was a summer resort before the war and had all the dreariness of a resort in the off season.

There was, however, a kind of stimulation in coming from a country lazily going about its own

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business, or doing a lot of disturbed thinking, to a nation that is seeing it through. The war was all about us, even in this border town. A *poilu*, home on leave, swung from a train in his battered old uniform, its horizon blue faded into streaks of rusty green and overhung with the dusty brown of his kit. Half a dozen others, in a uniform just as old but a little better brushed, mixed with the crowd of old Frenchmen who had come, like provincials all over the world, to see the train arrive.

It was pleasant, also, to see again the intelligent, spirited French face, to hear the lively buzz of French conversation, to have a seat at the drama that your Frenchman makes out of every ordinary transaction. I cannot possibly convey the serio-comic melodrama with which our veteran porter saw our baggage out of the Spanish train, through the customs and into the French train. His air, as he wheeled it from stopping place to stopping place, was that of a marshal of France, loaded down with the responsibilities of the Republic. His manner, as the woman customs official approached our trunks and asked me in a solemn, judicial tone whether I had anything to declare, showed a terrible apprehension. When I announced that I really had nothing to declare, and when the woman customs agent with a snap chalked her initials on the outside of the trunks, he broke into happy smiles.

When, again, he was forced to break to me that my baggage was of a surplus of weight, he ex-

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pressed such sympathy as he would have shown to a parent bereaved by the war; and when I told him the excess was less than I expected, and that I was glad to contribute to the war treasury of France, his manner conveyed that he had taken me to his bosom. Finally, when the moment came for the tip, his face grew apologetic, changing at once, after he had inspected his palm, to a look of intense gratitude.

All along the way he entertained me with news of that railroad junction and town gossip, pointing out the woman who was the mother of an aviator; the boy who was "reformed," with the Cross of War and the Military Medal; and finally the remarkable town dog, which one of the soldiers had brought back from the Front. This animal was of the German shepherd breed, the big dog at present most popular in France, in spite of the war. They are what we often call police dogs at home; nearest of all their kind they resemble wolves.

But this dog, as the porter took great pains to explain, was no common animal. He was really a German dog by birth—for the French had captured him from the Germans at the Battle of Champagne. But listen, monsieur; he was a French dog now—a veritable *poilu*. Listen again one time, monsieur; call him a *Boche* to his face and he would leap at you; he would try to bite you, to tear you apart! He looked peaceable there, with his tail wagging—business of waving the hand to imitate the tail—but just call him a *Boche!*



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—business of leaping most frightfully through the air.

I politely admired this wonderful accomplishment of the dog that had been rescued from German *Kultur*; and I did not tell the porter that this has become the stock trick of every German shepherd dog in France. It is like shaking hands or speaking—part of elementary puppy education. Myself, I once met a German shepherd dog of engaging expression tied before a château in Gascony. I called him a *Boche*, and only his chain saved my life.

Yes; it was France again, the country of pleasant human drama in small things. And that quality, which adds so much to the enjoyment of life, accounts perhaps for the attraction the Great Republic has for aliens. More than one German officer, captured at the Front, has mourned the fact that, with the hatred stirred up by this war, he can never live in Paris again—mourned it as his greatest personal calamity.

PARIS, April 21st.

The French hotel knows how to make you welcome, especially if you are an old guest. Scarcely were our suit cases open before Paul, who combines, since the war began, the functions of floor waiter and boots, entered to inform us of his joy at seeing us back on his floor. Paul had rather a hard time last winter. He is troubled with a double hernia; so when war broke out he was mo-



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bilized for work behind the lines—though he did have a little real fighting at the Battle of the Marne.

After a year he injured himself badly in lifting ammunition, and so he was reformed and allowed to resume civil occupation. He worked last year under constant pain; and last winter, he tells me, the time came when he needed another operation. As he incurred his injury in the line of military duty the Americans in this hotel got him admitted to the American Ambulance. His gratitude, as he told me how kind they had been at the Ambulance, how well they had cared for him, how efficiently the surgeons had patched him up, was enough to repay us for the little we did to help France before we entered the Alliance of Civilization.

Just afterward we found our floor clerk, who sits at the desk by the elevator attending to keys, mail and calls, arranging two pink carnations on my wife's dresser. A pretty, slender little woman from the harassed and troubled city of Lunéville, behind the Lorraine Front, she is married to Jules, our elevator man. Jules is a hero of the Marne; he wears the military medal on his green hotel uniform, and the Cross of War, with a star and a palm—showing that he had been cited once before a division and once before an army. He bears more marks of glory than that. His right leg is gone just below the hip. He has not yet grown quite accustomed to its mechanical substitute, so that he walks with a strange, awkward gait.

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These European hotel elevators have double doors, of which the corridor door swings outward. The elevator man is supposed to open this door, step out and bow as the guest passes. This service from a man who wears such decorations as Jules, and who moves so painfully, is grotesque. The guests at this hotel, both French and foreign, usually refuse to let him leave the elevator, and swing the door back when they have passed, in order to save him a step.

Their little boy, born just before the war, is in Normandy with his grandparents. Jules informs me that he is to be brought up next Tuesday for a short visit with his parents.

“It is a long time until Tuesday!” says Jules.

Our door porter, who flags taxicabs for the guests and sees that the boys get out the baggage, is similarly decorated and as badly mutilated. His right arm is gone from just below the shoulder, and several joints are missing from the fingers of the other hand.

This billet of door porter is a favorite post for mutilated men. The hotels seem to vie with one another in recognition of their heroism. Passing to-day the Café de la Paix, the center of Paris and of a Frenchman's universe, I noticed that the new cab starter is minus an arm and wears four decorations for valor.

Marie, the chambermaid, came in just before noon to put the finishing touches to our room. I rather dreaded her coming, because I had to ask

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for news; and I was afraid that it would be bad. Marie's sister is the cloak-room girl in this hotel. Now last summer I took several trips to the French Front. So every few days the servants would see me start out in khaki. I imagine that—ignorant of all the pleading and diplomacy which precedes a permission for the war zone—they thought I went to the Front whenever I wished, and was, therefore, a person of consequence; for one day, when Verdun was hot, I heard a ring at my door and opened it to find Marie and her sister standing there, timid and apologetic. Marie found her voice first. Could monsieur do a great favor? she asked; it might be much to ask—but—

When the war began they had three brothers mobilized. One was dead; one mutilated. The third was reported missing after the German attack at Fort de Vaux. Only that—missing! Prisoners had been taken. He might be a prisoner.

“Monsieur is a neutral,” she said; “is it possible to get any news of him from Germany?”

I did all I could—made inquiries through the proper diplomatic channels. No news had arrived when I left Paris last autumn; so I sent through Marie's name as next of kin, to whom information should be transmitted concerning M. Jean Eloge.

“Any news?” I asked Marie this morning when she had finished assuring me that she was happy to have us on her floor again.

“Very little, monsieur,” she replied.



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They had a letter last winter. It informed them that a sergeant who had entered the countercharge by Jean's side was a prisoner in Germany; but there was no news of Jean himself.

This afternoon Marie and her sister approached me again. Was I sure that I had done everything to be done? It was much to ask—but— To-morrow I will send out a tracer. It is the only thing I can do.

PARIS, April 23rd.

This is a place and period in the world's affairs when the weather forms more than a conventional topic of conversation. A dank cold hangs on and continues to hang on. As the Western World must know, the civilian population of Paris is short of coal. At this hotel, which keeps up a reputation for maintaining service in spite of the war, we have a faint suggestion of furnace heat in the morning. The rest of the day you must wear your ulster if you sit down indoors. Fortunately the tap still runs boiling water, and I find myself looking forward to a hot bath as the only comfortable moment of the day. Except for three days in sunny Andalusia, which has a climate like that of Southern California, I have not been warm since I landed in Europe a month ago.

From my acquaintances I get nothing but reminiscences of last winter—and the cold. It was a villainous winter, to begin with. Those who lived in central-heated apartment houses without fire-



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places suffered the most. When the landlord could get no more coal the heat stopped. The Municipal Council ordained that a landlord who could not furnish heat must refund two francs a day on the rent; but this gave small consolation. Those who had fireplaces were warm—sometimes. At times coal for domestic purposes could not be purchased even by the sack. Fortunately, most of the cooking here is done by gas, so almost every one had at least hot meals. One American mother tells me that she “sewed in” the children for the winter, like an East Side woman.

A Paris correspondent had an office heated only by a fireplace. He lived until January in a steam-heated flat. After two weeks of arctic cold he moved himself and his wife into one room, small by choice, which had a fireplace. When he wasn't working he searched for coal. He got just enough to keep a slender fire burning at home, but none for the office. He worked all winter in an ulster. The Bourse, or Stock Exchange, is near by, and he had a journalist's ticket of admission to the floor. The Bourse was heated, and every afternoon he strolled over there to thaw out.

A woman I know says she did some shameless “window shopping” at one of the great department stores. It has in its main hall a very large register, which poured out heat all last winter. Back and forth she used to stroll, past that register again and again, until she felt once more like a human being.

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I fancy that, even if the line continues locked, Paris will be warmer next winter. Though the enemy still holds the great coal fields on the north, France has fields at St.-Étienne, on the south. And it was not so much a coal-mining problem, I think, as a transportation problem, which the government is preparing to remedy. A visitor from Grenoble, not far from St.-Étienne, tells me he had no trouble in getting enough coal for an orphan asylum which he runs, and that the highest price was sixty-two francs, or about eleven dollars, a ton.

Further, the authorities are looking into peat, of which there is a supply, but little used, in Central France. A Franco-American engineer of my acquaintance—a *réformé* of the Foreign Legion—dragged me into his office yesterday to show me a lot of black lozenges about as big as a pill box. That was his solution for the domestic fuel situation—briquettes of peat. His machines, very simple, very cheap of construction, were beginning to turn out this product already. It was a perfect fuel for fireplaces and cookstoves; and this process made it condensed fuel, like coal.

I asked him whether he were not gambling with the duration of the war. If it ended next autumn he stood to lose his investment.

“Not at all!” he said. “If the war should end to-morrow there would still be coal shortage in Europe for some time. Everywhere—Germany and England, as well as France—they have been

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rushing coal extraction at the expense of development work. When the war ends they will have to do a lot of development before they can mine on the old scale. For several years no fuel will be scorned in Europe.”

PARIS, May 1st.

I have hesitated before to record just how Paris struck me upon my return after six months in England and America. The place seemed to me a little dead and dispirited as compared with its state last year. Sad it has always been since the war; but humanely, even attractively sad. This time, though I saw less mourning—the heavy crape of old days has gone out of fashion—I felt a kind of slackness in the spirits of the people. In spite of assurances that France was standing firm, I wondered whether the French were not growing over-weary of the war.

It is all explained. For on Sunday this villainously cold damp weather broke into a heavenly spring day, both warm and bracing. The sun of France streamed on the budding leaves; the light of France fell as in crystals over crowded streets. Paris, in a day, became more like her old insouciant self than I have ever seen her since the war commenced.

I did not venture into the country myself; but they tell me that every open space between Fontainebleau and Versailles was dotted with families, enjoying the fields, as the French love to do. The



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inbound tramways at dusk were packed; and every one carried a posy of primroses or violets. The Bois de Boulogne was a procession of carriages and motors. By three o'clock you could get across the battle line more easily than you could get a seat before the boulevard cafés; and the crowd that drifted past, blocking the sidewalks, had dared to blossom out into a little color. The weather has held for two days and the gay appearance of things continues.

The trouble with Paris, the factor I did not understand, was simply cold. A terribly hard winter, with insufficient fuel, a spring that bade fair never to break had got on the public nerves. It is hard to be enthusiastic or gay when you are chronically cold. The last three days have shown the real spirit of the city. It has been a long, dreadful grind; it will be a long grind still. But the sun is come at last; why not be a little gay?

PARIS, May 2nd.

Among the party at dinner last night was Doctor S——, an American surgeon, who has been patching up the wounded ever since 1914, and is now in American olive-drab khaki for the first time. The French attack of a fortnight ago brought its toll of wounded; to-day he had a dozen operations, besides his work of supervising two full hospitals. He was tired; but he was glowing, also, with the spirit of the French.

"I stand ashamed before them," he said.



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“Where do they get it? I cannot find such capacity for sacrifice within myself. Men who have stood the trenches for two years come back to me terribly wounded. There’s never a word of complaint and revolt; when you speak of their sufferings they simply say that it is all for France. I patch them up and they go back to it like brides. Hate it? Of course they do. Siege warfare is the dirtiest, nastiest thing known to the military art. But France will be cut into little pieces before she will yield. Make no mistake about the spirit of France. I deal with the wounded, who ought to be discouraged if any one is; and I know! France will go through with this game.”

Another who sat with us last night knows Russia. He was speaking of the Revolution, and he expressed the opinion that its greatest danger was a kind of loving tolerance in the Slavonic character which prevents them from taking strong measures in tragic emergencies.

“Years ago,” he said by way of illustration, “when the night of reaction was so dark that the people had only assassination as a means of defense, a brute of a police prefect in a certain town was marked for death. The revolutionaries laid their plot carefully. That was before the days of the automobile. As a get-away, they secured the fastest horse in the district. He belonged to a doctor, and to guard his owner they dyed his coat.

“The assassin—drawn by lot from a revolutionary committee—preferred to use the knife. His

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carriage, to which that fast horse was harnessed, drove up to a sidewalk where the prefect was reading a notice on a billboard. The revolutionary agent jumped out and stabbed him in the back—stabbed him, to make sure of the job, again and again.

“He leaped into the carriage. The muzhik driver, being excited, began lashing the horse. The assassin put a bloody hand on his shoulder and said:

“ ‘Don’t whip the poor horse; he is doing the best he can!’ ”

## CHAPTER IV

### MESSENGERS FROM BELGIUM

PARIS, May 9th

IF we ever have the United States of Europe—and in this day of political miracles who dares laugh at the most optimistic prophecy?—Paris will be the leading candidate for the capital. It has always been the most cosmopolitan city of the world; but in old years it was impossible to identify the nationality of pedestrians. It is easier now, when all the world has donned uniforms to fight Germany.

Yesterday I saw a detachment of officers registering at this hotel. Their uniform was new to me, but it so resembled the Italian in color and general effect that I thought it merely the costume of some corps I had not encountered at the Italian Front. They proved to be Portuguese. From the elevator came two of our own attachés, in the brown khaki, which is beginning to appear on the streets of Paris. They stopped to speak with two Belgian officers. The Belgian uniform most nearly resembles our own, as it happens. The only distinction, at first sight, is a browner shade of the khaki cloth. British officers in dull khaki,

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with the indefinably smart British cut, were taking tea in the lobby. Outside, a Russian officer, in a belted blouse and a cap whose peak clung close to his forehead, was trying to hail a taxicab.

That Russian uniform—a belted blouse which pulls over the head, comfortably loose breeches, knee-high cowhide boots—is said by commissary and supply uniform experts to be the most sensible in use along the line. Certainly it is the most distinctive. And since the Russians—on this front at least—are huge men, the crowd always stares at them as they swing along the boulevards.

On these fine spring afternoons the dull background of every civilian crowd is slashed with the colors of uniforms. Olive-green-gray and a plumed hat, such as Robin Hood wore—those are Italian Alpini officers, visiting Paris on some military mission. Yellowish khaki, wide trousers, red fezzes over dark, clean-cut faces—those are Arabian Turcos of the French Army. A little yellow individual trips delicately down the street; he wears loose khaki and a blue, visorless cap. He is an “imported” Chinese laborer. There come two fine, stalwart, romantic-looking men in golden-colored khaki, with caps of a curious cut. They are Serbian officers. The smart dullness of the British uniform is varied, here and there, by officers who wear epaulets of chain mail. They belong to the Indian cavalry.

In all this *mélange* the uniform of the Ameri-



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can Ambulance is becoming conspicuous. Even before the war, ambulance volunteers were pouring into Paris. Seventeen sections are working at the Front now; and men have been arriving so fast that a squad will leave this week not to run ambulances but to transport motor cars. Their uniform greatly resembles the British; the main difference is not in cut and color, but in the chevrons and insignia. However, I can always spot them even from the rear, by their free American stride, and usually by their size.

France has maintained a greater variety of uniform than any other nation on the Western Front. Now when a wounded man gets back to hospital from the line, his clothes are usually finished. When he becomes convalescent and begins to roam the boulevards, getting air, they dress him in whatever they have on hand.

Lieutenant V——, a member of the most famous fighting corps in the French Army, called on me to-day. Wounded at the Somme last autumn, he spent months in bed. About on crutches since a month ago, he found that his shattered leg needed special treatment to restore its flexibility; so he is going to a special hospital at the south of France. He was wearing an infantryman's light-blue fatigue cap, an artilleryman's khaki jacket, a cavalryman's red breeches and a pair of Canadian putties. These combinations add still more color and variety to the appearance of Parisian crowds.

This color of the streets becomes a kaleidoscope

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in the lobbies and smoking rooms of the music halls and variety theaters, where officers on leave go for their fling. These, now that spring has come, have not only the old gayety of Paris, but an additional gayety from the presence of so much youth in a state of rebound from trench life.

Just now an American vaudeville team is giving Paris its first big laugh of the war—Coleman and Alexandra, the latter being billed as *The Good-Luck Girl*. She is pretty; she is blond; she is a past mistress of American ragtime. In the last part of the turn she stands singing before a black curtain. The lights go out. A moment later you see her swinging through space above the front rows of the orchestra, in a floral horseshoe.

As a matter of fact, it is an illusion act; the basket in which she sits is attached to a long crane, shaped like a great wagon tongue and rendered invisible by a lighting trick; and an operator on the stage is making it swing or dip at will. She throws out toy balloons as she swings. The audience scrambles for them; they mean good luck. But the greatest luck of all, as the announcer tells you before the act, is to get one of her little blue strapped slippers.

The front rows and the stage boxes fill up after the intermission with officers of all nations, waiting for a chance at those slippers. When I saw her a week ago their performance was unsystematic. When I saw her again, last night, they had introduced teamwork.

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Alexandra, singing and twinkling her little blue feet saucily, dipped, dipped, dipped toward a row of British officers at the right of the orchestra. Suddenly three Britons rose up and a bantam among them sprang to their shoulders—a very creditable pyramid. He balanced himself, his comrades holding his ankles; he grabbed; he grazed Alexandra's toes just as she soared up to the ceiling, twinkling her feet and pretending to shoot them with her thumb and forefinger. The bantam lost his balance; the pyramid tumbled, all together, into the aisle.

Alexandra soared over toward the boxes. The French officers who occupied them stood on the parapet and clung with one hand to the curtains while they grabbed with the other; Alexandra, sparring with her feet, eluded them. The horse-shoe swung away; swung back. The Frenchmen grabbed again; the box curtain gave way, and down they went into the audience, which vented its delights in shrieks. She brushed lightly across the group of British officers; they formed a pyramid again; this time the apex man got a hold with one hand; but she pulled away.

She soared to the edge of the balcony and flirted with the front rows. Russians, Serbians and American Ambulance men crowded the aisles, making leaps into the air as she brushed just over their clutching hands. She trifled again with the British. This time they had a new apex man, a little fellow—a convalescent officer, I take it—in



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mufti. He did not content himself with standing on his comrades' shoulders as she swung past; he made a well-timed leap and grabbed the slipper with both hands.

It held for an instant; then the strap button parted—and he rose a moment later from the opera chair into which he had dropped, holding up the slipper as an outfielder, who has fallen after making a catch, holds up the ball.

The audience, standing by now, cheered madly. Alexandra, blowing a storm of kisses at the winner, continued to soar, to twinkle her other slipper over the heads below, to tease, tantalize, cajole. She made a dip; and suddenly an American Ambulance man who had been lying very low jumped three feet into the air, caught, held—and off came the other slipper. He mounted a chair, waving his trophy, and gave a wild rebel yell.

I don't know whether or not this is an old American turn; but it could never "go" at home, I suppose, as it does here in Paris with that strange audience—the soldiers of the ten nations.

PARIS, May 11th.

In the week before war was declared, the State Department ordered our young district food agents out of Belgium. However, by special request of all parties concerned, including the Germans, five or six remained behind, in order to close up the books and turn our property over to the Spanish and Dutch.



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These men, the last Americans who will pass, by permission, from the Central Powers during this war, reached Paris yesterday from Switzerland. This afternoon I found three of them sitting before a boulevard café with two others, who arrived in the first lot.

They were in a happy mood, these recent arrivals—larking like boys and giggling like school-girls. All had lived in the sober, repressed, tragic atmosphere of Belgium for at least a year—one of them since the third month of the war. "They told us that Paris was sad," said he. "Heavens, it's like Coney Island to me! The first thing I noticed when I crossed into Switzerland was that people were smiling!" Belgium, our food agents have been telling me ever since the war began, has the most depressing atmosphere in Europe.

However neutral the honor of these boys has made them in their acts, they have not been neutral for a long time in their thoughts. If any of them retained any doubts concerning the justice of the Allied cause, the damnable business of the Belgian deportations settled the question forever in their minds. Of this atrocity they told me tragedy after tragedy, crime after crime.

The Belgian branch of the commission keeps in each community a list of the unemployed, so as to administer charity with intelligent justice. The first act of the Germans, upon starting the deportations, was to demand these lists. Now part of the covenant with the allied governments was that

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we should furnish no information to the enemy. The Americans refused to show the lists, as the Germans probably expected they would. It was only a trick to shift the blame; what they wanted was not the unemployed, but skilled workmen, most of whom had jobs. So they proceeded to community after community, rounded up all the men, tore them from their families and rushed them on to trains.

The commission employs fifty-five thousand men in the vital work of food distribution. The directors in Brussels secured, or thought they secured, immunity for these people. White cards were issued to them; on presentation of these cards, the Germans said they would be spared deportation. When the first set of commission employees presented their cards the Germans tore them up and herded the bearers on to the trains with the rest.

Our men fought this matter out with the German central authorities and, after hundreds of commission employees had been transported, secured a new order against seizing any one who had a white card. A few days later, news came that fifty employees, in spite of their cards, had been deported from Luxemburg. An agent from the Brussels office rushed to the spot and found a Prussian commandant by whom the commission had already been troubled. He had his family with him; and a year ago he demanded from the Commission stores condensed milk for his baby.

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The matter was referred to the head office, which replied that its covenant with the Allies forbade handing over an ounce of food to the Germans. The milk could be got perfectly well, by a man in his position, from German sources—only it was a little more trouble. Faced by our agent, he declared flatly that he had deported these men for revenge. "I've been waiting to get at you fellows," he said. His revenge was murder, for some of them died in Germany.

The Germans, so far as possible, planned the work of deportation so that our men, sixty pairs of shrewd, impartial eyes, would not see it. However, one of the Americans with whom I talked this afternoon dropped unannounced into a Belgian town near Antwerp. He saw several hundred men lined up on the public square, surrounded by soldiers. Outside of the line stood the women, all crying. As each man was examined, he was ordered to move to right or left; those massed to the right were going to Germany. Every time a man stepped to the right a wail broke out from his woman in the crowd. When finally the procession started, the women made a rush to bid their men good-by. The soldiers beat them back; our American witness saw three women knocked senseless by gun butts.

Train after train passed through Brussels, carrying the men deported from Ghent. They were in cattle cars, packed so tightly that they had to stand; they had not eaten for twenty-four hours.



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But they threw from the train slips of paper on which they had written *On ne signera pas*—"We will not sign." This referred to the contracts the Germans had thrust under their noses—agreements which would bind them to stay in Germany and would make it appear that they went voluntarily.

"They shall not pass!" was the motto of free France at Verdun. "We will not sign!" was the motto of enslaved Belgium. Less than ten per cent did sign. And presently the wreckage began to come back.

One of our agents had three of his employees taken away. When they left they were stout, healthy Flemish men. When they returned, he went to see them at the hospital. "Indian famine victims were athletes beside them," he said. "I could span their biceps with my thumb and fingers. I could see every bone in their bodies. Their lips pulled back from their teeth as though they were already dead." One of them had smuggled out a little bowl of about the capacity of a teacup. Their ration, all this time, had been that bowlful of fish-head soup once a day—nothing more.

At the detention camp, when they refused to sign they were forced to stand at attention in the courtyard for twelve hours running. It was in the dead of a very cold winter. They had no coats, and if they tried to put their hands into their pockets the guards pricked them with bayo-



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nets. Their hands were frostbitten; one of them lost three fingers. Every day a German officer thrust a contract before them, offering them pay and good food if they would sign. "*Je ne signerai pas!*" they replied simply.

Faster and faster the wrecks of *Kultur* came back. They filled the hospitals in Liège and its vicinity. Some of their comrades had died in Germany; and some died in these hospitals. They had all been starved and tortured—but tortured in such a way that marks would not remain as proofs. In the dead of winter the guards broke the ice over pools or ditches and made them stand in the water for hours. This was the punishment for the "hopeless cases"—the "extra-stubborn," of whom the Germans had no further hope. Naturally their feet were frozen—but frozen feet, you see, may be an accident, while a mutilation carries its own proof. They were strung up by the thumbs. For a day at a time their hands were tied to beams above their heads.

When their condition was such that they would never make satisfactory laborers, the Germans began to ship them home—crippled, broken down with undernutrition, maimed. Many toes and feet and legs had to be amputated. One of these men, who died of frostbite, starvation and hardship, was just at his last gasp. The priest had administered extreme unction; his hands were folded on his breast. The doctor, by accident, jogged his

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elbow. His eyes opened. "No; I will not sign—I will not sign!" he muttered—and died.

So much loose talk runs about Europe that I should not fully believe such stories were I not sure of the source. But these are straight, cool-headed, reliable American men, of whom, as a member of the C. R. B., I have had knowledge ever since they entered Belgium. They have been to the hospitals and talked with the victims; and they know.

The Germans have stopped this deportation business. It did not pay in the first place. Nearly all the deported refused to sign and their experiments with torture got them nothing! Then the protest from the Vatican had its effect. Our men think there was another reason. The Belgians know the truth about many a situation on which the German populace is ridiculously misinformed. They were a "bad influence" on public morale.

Still, the first reason governed the German action, I think. If the Belgians could have been forced to manufacture machines to kill their own brothers Germany would doubtless have kept it up. It is perhaps the finest victory of passive resistance known to history. The courage of these plain Flemish artisans and peasants was more superb, I think, than the courage of battle.

When the German military authorities had to back water they framed, for the benefit of their own people, one of the most ridiculous excuses on

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record. The governor-general of Antwerp, where the first deportations occurred, was made the goat. He was reprimanded for being too soft-hearted with the Belgians! "Listening to their frantic pleas for employment," said the official report in effect, "and not considering that Germany, owing to her excellent internal condition, has plenty of labor, he has sent Belgian laborers into Germany faster than they can be used. He is ordered to send no more for the present."

One of our men spoke up at this point to tell another story of official hypocrisy. The Germans have been combing Belgium for brass and copper. A general order commanded every Belgian having a brass utensil or ornament in his possession to send a notice, with a full inventory, to the local commandant. The Belgians, quite naturally, were not eager to help the enemy make shells to kill their kinsmen on the Yser. Few articles were turned in; so the Germans sent searching squads from house to house. At about this time, an official item was circulated through the German press to this effect:

"Owing to the poverty of Belgium, the military command, wishing to assist these people as much as possible, has offered exceptionally high prices for brass and copper. By this means much useful metal has been added to our military stores!"

It is his sense of humor that keeps the Belgian alive in these heartbreaking times. All the mental ingenuity of a race dashed with the witty



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Gallic streak has been turned to the job of making the *Boche* uncomfortable. The Germans are characteristically lacking in sense of humor. For Belgian wit they have only one repartee—it is to put the jester in jail. Most of the stories, some of them unpublishable, about what the Belgian said to the German end: “And then they gave him two weeks.”

For example, in a village near Antwerp, the Staff ordered all the horses brought to the artillery barracks, so that the Germans might requisition those they wanted. One old Belgian appeared with seven horses. Six were crowbait, but the seventh was a beautiful animal. The owner ran him round and round the yard, putting him through his paces. He had a superb gait. The Germans took him on the spot, paying three hundred and fifty francs in war requisition scrip. That alleged money, in case Germany pulls out without indemnity, will be of a value to make Confederate currency look like Bank of England notes.

The next morning the former owner of this horse was arrested and haled before the *Kommandant*.

“You’ve cheated us!” roared the German. “Your horse is no good!”

“What’s the matter with him?” inquired the Belgian, with a manner of childish innocence.

“When we tried to back him out of the stable this morning he fell down. Every time we try to



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back him he falls down! He's paralyzed somewhere. He can't back up; and you know it!"

"Oh, that's all right!" replied the Belgian. "I thought you'd need that kind of horse when you come to try to cross the Yser."

German repartee, in this case, was exceptionally ready and witty. He got a month!

No sooner is a solemn proclamation of the German Government posted on the walls of Brussels than a burlesque of it, even to a forgery of the official seal, appears on the streets. Who prints these proclamations, and where they are printed, the Germans would like to know. *La Libre Belgique*, that mysterious perambulating newspaper, continues to publish its biting satire on the Germans and its news of allied victories. Now it seems to issue from one town and now from another; but the Germans, though they have made many arrests, cannot find its types or its press.

A general joke on the Germans—something subtle enough to lie within the rules and still obvious enough to annoy them—seems to spring up in a night and pass through the kingdom by mental telepathy. The Germans forbade the Belgians to wear their national colors. Next morning all Belgium wore green—the color of hope.

When the German peace proposals were announced the Belgians took to strolling by twos and threes past all the German officers they saw, and remarking in a clear yet natural tone of voice: "I see the Germans are suing for peace!"

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By night apoplectic German officers were breaking into these groups and roaring:

“That’s a lie! Germany is proposing peace!”

Three times Brussels has been “closed” as a punishment for offending the might and majesty of the Kaiser. Under this form of punishment no public assemblies and amusements are allowed, and every one must stay indoors after seven o’clock in the evening. The first time the sentence was for one day only; it followed a little cheering on the National Fête Day. The next time Brussels offended was when the famous Belgian aëroplane flew over the city, dropping proclamations of hope and cheer.

That occasion was very dramatic. It happened on a clear, black night when the streets ran full. Suddenly the crowd caught the sound of aërial engines. That unmistakable whir-r-r, coming at night over a city in the war zone, always gives people pause—it may mean bombs. The engines sounded nearer and nearer. The plane, from the sound, seemed to be making a landing.

Suddenly a searchlight flashed from the aëroplane, revealing the aviator, who immediately broke out the Belgian flag. Then white leaves began to flutter downward. Along the Avenue Louise it sped, so low that it seemed scarcely to skim the lamp-posts. Suddenly the light went out; but the noise of the engines showed that it was escaping unscathed. All Brussels broke into wild cheers.

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The German repartee was announced next morning from the Hôtel de Ville: Five days.

Brussels was a strange city that night. Except for sentinels, the streets were deserted. But every window was wide open and blazing with light. Every talking machine was booming its loudest record. Every piano was tinkling, every fiddle scraping, every cornet tooting. People leaned out from their casements and held long, interesting and animated conversations with friends across the street. Amateur male quartets rendered selections of American ragtime. Dogs barked their heads off. However, it was all within the rules.

Next morning the Germans amended the order so as to prohibit open windows, playing musical instruments, conversations above an ordinary tone of voice, song, and barking. But Brussels had its joke.

Such incidents both enrage and puzzle the Germans.

“See all we’ve done for this people!” they say. “Look at our forbearance! In place of their own rotten government we’ve given them the German Government—the best the world ever knew—and they behave like this! They are blind, stubborn, ungrateful!”

This seems incredible; but it is the general attitude of the German official, our men declare.

No; the Belgians certainly have not responded! The University of Ghent was founded last year



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by the conquerors, "to restore the language and culture of the Flemish people, a Germanic tribe too long under debasing French influence." It has forty professors and thirty students; most of the students are of German parentage.

Last year, the Germans spawned a great idea—an exhibition of German *Kultur*, showing how the benevolent conqueror ran his cities and ordered his industries. They commandeered the largest hall in Brussels and filled it with exhibits. Through the Commission they prepared to feed immense numbers of tourists. They ran excursions from Antwerp and other points at half rates.

The arrangement was this: You bought your ticket, one way, from Antwerp. It carried a coupon, which you retained. Upon leaving the exhibition hall in Brussels, you exchanged the coupon at the turnstile for a free return ticket. This was by way of making sure that the tourist would attend.

Great crowds took advantage of the rates; they presented themselves at the exhibition, entered the vestibule of the hall, and immediately walked out through the exit, collecting the return tickets. Not one of them entered the hall; the great exposition of *Kultur* was witnessed by Germans alone. I must explain that civilian travel is forbidden in Belgium except by special permission of the Germans. One must stay in his own town. Antwerp was full of people who had long wanted to visit relatives and friends in Brussels. This was their



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chance—and at half rates! The Germans, of course, were furious. “Blind, stupid ingrates!” they called the Belgians, as they packed up the exhibits and sent them home.

Our men tried to introduce some of our own *Kultur* last summer, with but little better success. The Department of Northern France organized a baseball team and challenged the head office at Brussels to a series of games. The matches, which resulted in a complete victory for the Central Office, were played at Brussels.

Belgian society attended, partly out of compliment to America and partly out of curiosity. In advance our men boosted the game, telling the Belgians how especially clean, safe and civilized a sport it was. And in the very first inning Gray, sliding to second, broke his arm, and had to be patched up before the grand stand by Doctor Leech, pitcher for the North of France team.

The Belgians never did seem to discover what it was all about. Some one had explained that the object of the batsman was to hit the ball. So grounders brought mild handclapping and outfield flies, cheers; but when a batsman sent up a high pop fly, which dropped straight into the catcher's glove, the grand stand rose and gave him an ovation.

Though each remembered some German whom he liked or admired, our men came out with a nauseating sickness of the whole German game. However, only one of them expressed his feelings

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in Belgium. On the night when the first squad left, their Belgian friends entertained them. One of the departing Americans dined too well. At the eleventh hour he was dragged to the train, clutching his golf clubs, which he refused to let the porter carry.

“Important use for those implements,” he said darkly.

The platform was full of German soldiers and officers. As the train started he leaned from the window of his compartment, wearing a smile of long-delayed satisfaction, and brandished his driver, with which he neatly knocked off every German helmet he passed!

## CHAPTER V

### CAMIONS AND MIDINETTES

PARIS, May 1st.

THE world is a small place after all—a statement so ancient and bromidic that no self-respecting person is supposed to use it any more—and so is this war. I had an incidental meeting at Verdun last summer with a lieutenant of the French Army who spoke good and idiomatic English. He was assigned, as it happened, to take me past “Dead Man’s Corner” to an advanced dressing post somewhere behind the Fort de Dugny. As we prepared to start I remembered that I had left off my steel helmet, a piece of hardware very reassuring in those shrapnel-saturated atmospheres. I stopped the car and ran back to quarters to get it; and as I returned he remarked with a laugh:

“That’s right; stick to your French derby in these parts.”

Now an Englishman calls the ugliest piece of headgear known to man a “bowler”; and so I answered:

“You didn’t learn your English in England.”

“I should say not!” he replied. “Say, you

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don't know any one who wants to buy some town lots in Los Angeles, do you? Because I've got 'em to sell."

Yesterday I went up to a town on the fringe of the war zone, to visit the Americans who are training for officers in the new Mechanical Transport Corps. In the process of being shown round I passed through a shed built of black paper over a board floor; and a cheerful American voice with a French tang, which seemed somehow familiar, floated across the lath-and-paper partition, saying: "The lieutenant here tells you you've got to get it white-hot before you weld it—white-hot—see? Watch him do it—now get that!"

I peeped round the corner of the partition. It was my old acquaintance—old as war goes—of Fort de Dugny and points north. Assigned to take care of the American ambulances because he was beyond military age when he volunteered, and because he knew American English, he had now been transferred to this school in order that he might explain the subtleties of automobile French to our volunteers. Grouped about him, their arms over each other's shoulders, were fifteen stalwart young men in the uniform of the American Ambulance.

These boys are pioneers in a new departure. Just before our declaration of war, so many volunteers for the American Field Sections, which used to run the ambulances, poured into Paris that Piatt Andrew, the director, conceived the idea



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of extending his work to a more vital and necessary function of the French Army—getting up the ammunition to the artillery. A whole section left last week for its final training at the Front, and others will follow fast.

It is not impossible that a great deal of the ammunition handling in those French regiments that do most of the active fighting will soon be in American hands. The transport service needs officers as much as any other branch of the service; and in consequence these fifteen men, all experienced ambulance drivers, most of them wearing that *Croix de Guerre* which proves their valor, have been told off to learn the profession. At this training school they share instruction, bed and board with one hundred and fifty Frenchmen, also working for commissions.

For five or six weeks they will be crammed with facts concerning army *camions*, automobile machinery in general, the organization of the French Army, the theory and practice of handling men. Having passed their examinations they will gradually replace the French officers in temporary command. Just what their standing will be, in either the French Army or the American, no one knows yet. They will have the power and privileges of French second lieutenants for the present, without the chevrons or the pay—the title will be simply Volunteer Chief of Section.

The régime at this school is hard enough even for the natives. I have long suspected that Euro-

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pean boys are always expected to work harder at school than our own young loafers; and this is an affair of war, when every man is supposed to put in the best that he has. For our men, mostly imperfectly acquainted with French, it is doubly hard. The day begins at half past five in the morning with reveille and a French breakfast of coffee and war bread. All the morning they are listening to lectures, are watching laboratory demonstrations, are toiling over machinery. The course includes taking a five-ton truck to pieces and putting it together again. Taking them apart is easy, but putting them together—one of the Americans remarked to me under his breath, as he pawed through a mess of bolts, nuts, oil cups and spare parts, "I've Dutched it complete, *Gott strafe* it! But the head mechanic has just pointed out a defective part, so I'll have an alibi when the instructor comes round."

After luncheon usually comes drill; mechanical transport men as well as cavalry and infantry must learn how to get to a certain place in a certain time, which is about all there is to drill nowadays. Here, I find, the Americans give a comedy touch to life in camp. Nearly every Frenchman has done his two years of military service in his youth, and has learned that peculiar snap and click which the Frenchman puts into military evolution. While the French were learning the manual of arms our boys were playing football and tennis. They move, therefore, with the ease of

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trained athletes—a gait pleasing to the artistic eye, but unmilitary in the extreme. Somehow it strikes the French as funny; they are always sitting on the fence and calling out pleasantly sarcastic encouragement as our men swing by.

Yet though their drilling has been a joke to the French *poilu*, they themselves have been a great hit. There is no use in talking, the Americans and the French get along well together. No sooner were our men established in camp than their French comrades gave them a dinner. The fare was the regular army ration, supplemented by a few extra courses bought by subscription. An artiste from the Opéra was brought specially from Paris to sing for them, and both the colonel and an orator elected from the French students made speeches. The student spiced his talk with a few witty references to American peculiarities.

Some response had to be made; and one of our boys was shoved to his feet. In halting French he mentioned that the Americans, sitting apart by themselves in the mess hall, would prefer to sit with the French. The whole house rose, yelling, "Come to our table!" "Come to ours!" An enterprising Frenchman rushed through the mob, caught an American about the waist and dragged him to his table.

That started a riot—every one fighting for an American. Now they are mixed up satisfactorily with the French. The Americans will return hospitality next week with a dinner of their own, and



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they are trying to get an American prima donna to furnish the entertainment.

I lunched with four or five of the boys at a café outside the gates of the camp. A sergeant arrived in the midst of luncheon with orders for the afternoon. That period is given up usually to road work. The students take out a section of automobile trucks and make a practice run. Each day a different man commands them as chief of section. He carries running orders, made out in the regular French military form, and a map of the sector. No one explains the map or the orders to him; he must work it all out for himself; and the officers, I suspect, try to make it as hard as possible.

The chief of section does not ride on a truck like the rank and file. He has a touring car for a war horse; he runs up and down the line, directing the route, straightening out tangles, and especially looking after breakdowns. When the machinery of a truck goes wrong it is run at once to the side of the road, that traffic may not be impeded. The chief—here is use for his learning in the anatomy of automobiles—looks it over and determines if jury repairs can be made. If not he telephones to the mechanics at the base, mounts his war horse, and hurries on after the convoy.

Bigelow, the orders stated, was officer for the day; with the orders went a map over which he was still knitting his brows when one of the company glanced at his wrist watch and said, "Only



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three minutes to one-thirty, Big.” We rushed over to the American tent to see the squad start out.

“*Rassemblement!*” ordered Bigelow, practicing his army French, and the squad fell in. “*A droit alignement—fixe! Les ordres du jour*—I guess, fellows, we’d better go at the rest of this in United States. Here’s the orders”—and he read off the assignments of drivers and assistants. “Now you’ve got it? All right. *A droite par quatres-marche!*”

While the squad marched to the automobile park and got out the *camions* we drove forward with a French captain and Lieutenant K——, the Frenchman from Los Angeles; drove through one of the sweetest bits of countryside, all green fields, spreading trees, bright little gray villages and tumbling hedges of lilac. We stopped before a farmhouse on the edge of a village, and here Lieutenant K—— smiled sardonically to himself before he said:

“This is where they’ll fall down—it’s nearly a cinch. Bigelow’s got orders to turn to the left, according to the map. There are two roads here. This one to the left looks all right, but it runs into a *cul-de-sac*. The one beyond there”—he indicated a turn a hundred yards away—“is the road we’re driving at. We’re resting here to make it harder. He’ll take this road, for a cinch!”

The lieutenant and the captain rubbed their

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hands in anticipation. A moment later a burst of dust at the top of a distant hill signaled the approach of the transport train. Out of the dust, presently, came the light touring car. It slowed up as it passed us; Bigelow sat beside the military driver, studying that map. He looked back, he looked beyond; the car backed up, turned round, and Bigelow, saluting perfunctorily, cast a long look down the lieutenant's trap.

"It's a cinch!" murmured Lieutenant K—. "Bet you anything!"

He would have won. The leading truck turned past the farmhouse; the others rumbled after it. Bigelow, still unaware, followed the trailer, and we followed him. We rounded a turn. In a gully below us the convoy was stacked up, the leading truck with its nose jammed against the barn to which that road led. And the blushing Bigelow came tramping back along the road to salute and report:

"I took the wrong turning, sir."

"You did!" said the captain in French, and every one laughed. "That was put into the day's run to show you that maps are not merely decorative. You won't do that again, will you? It's only a little mistake, my boy. We all make them. Now find the right road!"

Ten minutes later the *camions* were backing out into the main highway, under observation of a crowd of villagers, conspicuously a stout peasant woman, with a twin on each arm, who asked me,

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as we passed, who these gentlemen were in the strange uniforms—Russians, perhaps, or English?

Bigelow acquitted himself without error for the rest of the day. Some fifteen miles away from camp the convoy was parked in the plaza of a little war-zone town—parked, according to standing orders, with the greatest economy of space. Then it ran monotonously back to camp, the captain and Lieutenant K——, in their fast touring car, shooting ahead by spurts and reviewing it at this or that crossroad, to criticize its technic and alignment. The *camions* parked at headquarters, the squad hurried to the lecture hall—a structure of laths and building paper with a bank of benches—where the captain talked an hour on the practical lessons of that day's run. Then dinner; and then study until ten o'clock.

This day's work of our embryo American officers was merely a glimpse of the organization behind the lines, of which the American people know so little and of which we must know so much if this war drags on to its expected length. The mechanical transport of automobile trucks has served to counteract for the French the German strategic railroads. Along with the valor of the men at the Front, it saved Verdun.

PARIS, May 19th.

The strike of the "midinettes," the sewing women of the great and famous Parisian dress-



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makers, is the event of the hour along the boulevards. The proprietors, it appears, decided that owing to slack times they would enforce the "English week," which means a Saturday half holiday. The girls liked that until they learned that they would be docked for that half day. Then they struck; and while they were about it they demanded a franc a day additional pay to meet the increased cost of living.

So far, it has been rather a gay and merry strike. All day I have been meeting bands of marching women, sometimes singing, sometimes calling badinage to the crowds on the sidewalk cafés—for it is lovely weather and the boulevards are full. As a Socialist newspaper remarked this morning, the *boulevardier*—the Parisian equivalent of our man-about-town—has a chance to see the midinette as she really is.

Much fake literature has been written about the girl of this craft; there she figures as sister to the girl of the Latin Quarter—*chic*, romantic, living on love and music. In reality she is simply a working girl. Some, indeed, were young, as you saw them along the boulevards, and they had about them that touch of smartness which the French girl knows how to put into eight dollars' worth of clothes. More were middle-aged, appearing like working mothers of families. Some were old women, even toothless old women. Here and there in the marching groups appeared the horizon blue of the army—soldier brothers or



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lovers, home on leave, who marched with them for sympathy. And usually, tailing the procession at a respectful distance, were four or five worried-looking policemen.

They were gay enough until they lined up before the dressmaking shops for a demonstration; and then it became a slightly different matter. Victor Hugo said that he felt two natures struggling within him. That duality of nature is most pronounced in the French. On one side your Frenchman is a sprightly, entertaining and humorous angel; but there's a sleeping tiger in him too. That tiger wakes when he goes into action; it explains why an army of quiet, courteous, joking little men, who look like anything but soldiers, has been able to hold against the greatest military power in the modern world.

I saw a flash of the tiger to-day. On the street near the Opéra, where I go for my mail, a crowd had filed up before a famous dressmaker's. The babble sounded a block down the street. Three policemen were barring the door, and half a dozen girl strikers were making defiant gestures under their noses while talking five hundred insulting words a minute.

I left the American lady with whom I was walking on the edge of the crowd, while I pushed forward toward the focus of disturbance. Some one from the rear shouted "There they are—the camels!" The surge of the crowd carried me to the middle of the street. As I looked over my

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shoulder I saw that the three policemen, their faces very red from keeping silence under insult, were drawing long breaths of relief and smiling faintly.

Leaning over the balcony rail on the second floor were three women dressed in simple but expensive-looking black and with their hair elaborately coifed—Parisian forewomen these, the kind of haughty countesses who put madame's dress into a fit while twittering compliments in dovelike voices. Languidly they leaned, with an expression of haughty disdain, while the midinettes called them horrible unprintable names—like camels, onions, carrots and little pink pigs!

I turned back to the lady whom I had left on the sidewalk. She was lost to view, surrounded; I saw arms waving above heads. I made my way to her. She was backed against the wall, more embarrassed than frightened, for she speaks but little French. Three or four of the more emotional among the strikers were talking at the top of their voices, their eyes gleaming, their teeth showing; and one, a buxom, black-eyed fury of a creature, was fingering the lapel of a new coat that the American woman was wearing.

“Listen, madame!” the black-eyed girl was saying; “you are rich and we are poor. You paid for that coat—you bought it at the Galerie Lafayette—two hundred, perhaps three hundred francs.” This was true, by the way. “I know, for I make those coats. And what do I get for

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making a coat like this? Three francs! Is it right?"

"Is it right? No! No!" clamored the girls behind her.

The American lady happens to sympathize with labor. She found enough French to say:

"You are right! It is not just! We are Americans. Our girls are better paid in America."

"Yes; they did it themselves by organizing," I said.

Then, like the sun breaking, their faces smoothed out to smiles. They oh-ed and oh-ed. "Americans!" they said, and "They are with us!" The black-eyed girl who had been fingering the new coat cried "*Vive l'Amerique!*" They all took it up.

"*Vive la France! Vive les midinettes!*" I cried, waving my hat. There was tremendous applause, and as the strikers moved away they were craning their necks to wave at us. So was our little riot turned into a pro-Ally ratification meeting; but, all the same, while I watched them fingering madame's coat I understood the knitting women about the guillotine which once purged France—and also the Battle of the Marne!

PARIS, May 21st.

I ran up yesterday to a beautiful old French town where three of our American boys, rather envied by other young men who are ready to offer their swords to France, have been put in training



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as artillery officers. When they pass their examinations and get the *galons* as second lieutenants they will take command in French regiments at the Front.

Doubtless when our new troops arrive they will be transferred, owing to their practical experience on this Front; and they should be invaluable. I had a little hunt for them, and so I chartered the carriage of a businesslike woman driver who asked for my trade at the station.

It was an all-feminist equipment, that cab; the horse was named Julie, and the dog Sophie. This Sophie was an Airedale, and she took her job so seriously that she was run down to skin and bone. She went before the cab all the way, wearing a manner of pompous authority, looking back now and then to assure herself that all was well. Whenever she found a male dog in the way she took outrageous advantage of dog chivalry and, barking with authority, chased him onto the sidewalk. Once we ran foul of an army *camion*, and she tried to bark that also out of the way. This awakened militant womanhood, just breaking into industry, takes its job with great seriousness.

Unless you are writing under the censorship, as I am not at this moment, it is unfair to describe military arrangements, even training schools. I merely quote, therefore, what one of the boys said when I found them and went to dinner with them. He was in a class of one hundred and fifty Frenchmen, all younger than he, all less advanced



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in their education. They had been chosen by competitive examination for entrance into the school.

"I'm having a hard time keeping up," he said. "It's not only French—and if you think you know this language try some technical stuff and find how much you don't know—it's general knowledge. They run rings round me in mathematics and physics—and what they know they know certainly and accurately. English and American colleges don't turn out such scholars as these."

It is being borne upon me that Continental boys get a great deal more education out of their schools than ours of the English-speaking races. I am sure it is so with the French and Italians, and it must be so with the Germans. I wonder, sometimes, if the day of the picturesque college loafer is not over for England and the United States.

PARIS, May 22d.

I am having the dickens of a time about a camera; and my experience brings out a detail of wartime life that seems to have escaped notice at home. It is the manner in which everything runs to seed.

Mine is a German camera—bought, I hasten to say, before the war. I've carried it so long that its use is second nature to me. It has crossed the ocean eleven times, and has knocked about in the baggage of all armies. When in New York last winter, it began to show signs of wear. I should have got a new one, but I did not—partly

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through laziness and partly because it seemed like throwing down an old friend. Last week its focusing apparatus broke down.

I took it to the American camera house where I buy films and have developing done, and asked to have it repaired. "Quite impossible," they said; "no one to do it." I tried again, at a French establishment. They were very sorry, but it couldn't be done. I got the same story at three other places. Finally I found a French house that held out a possibility of making repairs—this, mind you, would probably be a half-hour's job for an expert mechanic—in about two weeks. A workman of the firm was coming home on leave in about that period, and might work a little—"if nothing happens to him meantime," they added grimly.

The hardest thing to obtain in Paris, these days, is repairs. Such mechanics as are not mobilized find their time fully occupied in necessary industries. Now and then, by searching, one can get a munitions worker to do a little repairing in his leisure hours. That is about the sole dependence.

Wandering about from camera shop to camera shop with this idea in mind I noticed fully for the first time how Paris has run down at the heel. I have not seen a brushful of paint applied to the exterior of a building since the war began. Paint is peeling with age; varnish is cracking. Just off the boulevards is a fashionable tailor shop bearing a sign made of some substance that looks like

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isinglass covered by plain glass. The isinglass has begun to crack and peel, so that half the letters are obliterated. Carpets and rugs, wherever I went, were frayed and worn. Looms are too busy with uniforms, ships too busy with munitions, to trifle with merely ornamental floor-covering. All signboards are ridiculously shabby; some are getting hard to read.

After my search for camera repairs I drifted into a newspaper office. "Take care," said the editor; "the bottom's out of that chair!" I sat down in another, which slowly settled under my weight. "There, blast it!" he said. "I thought that one would be going soon! I've got to take time to go rummaging in secondhand stores for chairs," he continued. "I priced new ones the other day, and the price was beyond belief. I suppose there's hardly been a chair made in France during the last year or two; and of course we're not importing chairs just now. As for repairs—you might as well whistle for the moon!"

I met an American woman yesterday, mourning over the loss of her bag, which she left in the Metro. "It isn't the money," she said, "though I couldn't afford to lose that. It is my keys—I can never, never get new ones made!"

Life in the latter stages of a long-drawn-out war like this goes down toward basic necessities; and everything pertaining to half necessities or to luxuries looks a little decayed just now.



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PARIS, May 23d.

It is getting hard to keep track of American activities in this town; and if that is the case now what will it be when our armies really begin to arrive! You seldom enter a resort frequented by our countrymen but you meet some young fellow who is going into aviation or is waiting for his Red Cross enlistment or is asking questions about the Foreign Legion.

As for what used to be the American Ambulance Field Service, they are coming so fast that the management has trouble in handling them. The organization, by the way, has dropped the word Ambulance from its official designation, and is known simply as the American Field Service.

This change of name is a matter of some importance. For, not content with the twenty or more ambulance sections operating at the Front, it has begun, as I recorded a few days ago, to form sections for transport service. If under these circumstances it pretended to be strictly an ambulance service it would be sailing under false colors, since motor-truck drivers carrying ammunition to the guns are belligerents in every respect, while ambulance men are not. The *camion* drivers, who go armed to the Front, have altered their uniforms accordingly, taking off the Red Cross buttons and tabs of ambulance drivers and replacing them by the regular buttons and tabs of that branch of the French service.

In a few days I am going up to see the first



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motor transport section received at the actual fighting Front and put to work. As a preliminary, I dropped into the headquarters of the service at Passy. It is housed in an old château, a country place before Paris grew outward and took in Passy. A great garden that is almost a park lies below the château. In this park several iron springs still bubble out reddish-brown waters; they are the *Eaux de Passy*, famous in French literature of the eighteenth century. In these gardens, sitting with his head bare to the sun to stimulate imagination, Jean Jacques Rousseau wrote the first of his operas. Here, tradition says, Franklin made his experiments with the lightning rod. The window of his lodgings when he was the social hit of Paris looks down on the park. And the whole place is haunted by the spirit of Voltaire, who used to meditate and work in these gardens.

Now, the château shows little of its old splendor. It has been changed into a set of offices, among the most busy in Paris. The old and commodious servants' quarters in the basement have been transformed into dining-rooms for the field-service men, and what was once a vaulted corridor, where fashionables taking the waters could get out of the sun, is a dormitory whose iron cots, furnished with gray army blankets, are ranged close side by side. Even these quarters have become insufficient, and the park that was once the Waters of Passy is dotted with white tents.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE AMERICAN VANGUARD

#### THE WAR ZONE, May —.

[If I gave the exact date maybe the censor would object.]

THE old-time war correspondent, according to his own story, used to scratch off his dispatches, on the night of battle, while sitting in a tent with the guns rumbling, and using a drumhead for a desk. This is the first time, in nearly three years of war, that I have had a chance to imitate him, even remotely.

There is no drumhead to be had; the only drum I remember to have seen in the war zone was carried by a military band which serenaded us one night at a British rest station. Otherwise, I am giving a mild imitation of the old act.

For I am scratching off these notes, before the details grow faint in memory, under a villainously dim lantern in the trailer of a *camion*, or army automobile truck. We shall be forced before long to take that word *camion* into the language; like most French military terms it is shorter and neater than ours and expresses one thing and one thing only. Therefore I propose to use it in future without apologies or quotation marks.

These two-wheel trailers, which rest their ends

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on steel braces when there are no *camions* to hold them up, are used in camp as offices or quarters for the officers. This one has a little board writing shelf that lets down from the wall when the trailer is at rest; I am using that instead of a drumhead. The guns are doing their part; what the communiques will call in a day or so a "bombardment of sufficient intensity" is going on at the line, a few miles away. The big fellows have just opened, and their distant blast rattled the walls of the trailer a little.

From the other side come sounds not entirely appropriate to the setting—a chorus of young male voices chanting, with a long-drawn-out, unctuous chorus, "Ise been workin' on the railroad." They have been singing for an hour every college song known between the Atlantic and the Pacific; for taps has not yet sounded; and, besides, discipline is a little lax for them this evening. To-morrow morning these singers, the pioneer American *camion* section at the French Front, are to report at the line, finished transport drivers, for their actual work; and I am going with them.

I wrote about the school for *camion* officers a few days ago. Men as well as officers need instruction in this branch of the service. When this pioneer section left Paris, a fortnight back, people supposed they were going straight to the Front. As a matter of fact they were bound for this place within range of the guns for instruction. They are almost all university men, and as such know



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how to drive touring cars; but driving a five-ton *camion* on bad roads is a special art.

The *camion* officers whom I saw in training last week are veterans of the ambulance service and know a thousand and one tricks about roads and shell-dodging and the ways and regulations of the French Army. These boys, most of whom were studying at Cornell two months ago, are green to the whole army game.

In case I forget, this is prevalently a Cornell section. Tinkham, who will take them out as *chef de section*—and probably, later, as lieutenant—is the bellwether who led them away from their books. An old ambulance man, he visited Cornell last winter and recruited this section for ambulance work. When they arrived the need for *camion* drivers became pressing. They volunteered, and were taken before other volunteers largely because Cornell has military drill and gives therefore a kind of preliminary army education.

I have been knocking about with the officers all the afternoon watching the second section—which will follow in a fortnight—get its schooling. The whole process of education in automobile driving on this part of the Front is in charge of a captain. Lieutenant G——, of the French Army, has charge of the Americans, largely because he speaks English. A fine, upstanding, clean-cut French gentleman, he has a roving streak in him. Early in life he yearned to know America. So for two years

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he wandered in our midst, picking up his living by working in department stores in New York, Chicago and Pittsburgh. This afternoon he told me that one day in Chicago a French-Canadian woman who could not speak English entered the store. He was told off to wait on her. When she had finished buying, she said:

“You speak rather good French, monsieur.”

“Madame flatters me,” he replied in the French formula for receiving a compliment.

“But of course,” she added, “if you want the real French accent you must go to Paris. Your French is so good that it is a pity not to have it perfect!”

Lieutenant G——, as it happens, is a Parisian born and bred.

He entered the war as a second lieutenant in the Infantry Reserve. He was wounded in the leg and the back during the early fighting for Verdun. Invalided and returned to the line, he got it again—this time a shell fragment in the left forearm. Ten months in hospital followed. He came out with a deep dent along his wrist and with all the fingers except two paralyzed. So, owing to capacity for leadership and his knowledge of the language, he was put at this work.

He is popular with the men, of course; but that is the way of the French Army. Any officer who cannot hold his men by the handle of their affections is gradually shunted out of command.

The second lieutenant, who gives most of the

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lecture courses, is an American citizen, though he never saw America. His parents were natives of the United States who followed their business to Paris, where he was born. As he grew up and inherited his share of the business he maintained his American connections. When a French boy in his circumstances comes of age he must declare whether he wants to be a citizen of his father's country or of France. He chose the United States.

But when the war came he wanted to do something for France. "One thing I did know, I remembered, was automobiles," he told me to-day. He entered the transport service as a private and worked his way up to his commission. All through the trying days of the Verdun attack, when improvised automobile transport saved the day, he was hustling *camions* forward through towns harassed by air raids, swept with shells. Because he speaks perfect English—I cannot understand how, living always in Paris, he has acquired so much of our slang—because he knows automobiles from tire to cover, and because of his experience with army transport, he is an ideal instructor; and he does most of the teaching.

I visited his schoolroom this afternoon. We are camped in a pretty piece of wood, but a farm with ample buildings stands about a quarter of a mile along the road; and about half a mile farther, a town. There, in the mayor's office, the boys listen to lectures. Section A, which goes out



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to-morrow under Tinkham, with Scully, of Princeton, as his assistant, has finished its school education.

Sub-lieutenant O—— was working with Section B. At the moment when I entered the room the boys, grouped round a long table, were listening while he held forth on petrol—or gasoline, as we call it in defiance of English precedent. How to judge the quality of gasoline, how to look out for water, how to act when water stopped proceedings—he instructed them carefully on all that. He ended with a lecture which some of our own automobile owners who want to help in this war might take to heart.

“Remember,” he said, “that every ten-gallon can of petrol takes up as much space as a sack of flour, and that our trouble at present is ocean transport. Your job, next to getting ammunition through, is to save petrol. Every time you stop your car and keep the engine running, just because you are too lazy to get down and crank up, you are burning a fluid of which there is none too much in the world; and a fluid which has to be brought here in ships. In ten minutes of useless engine work you are wasting somebody’s loaf of bread.”

There was a short rest period before the hour for practical instruction, which means running a five-ton truck as part of a procession along calculatedly villainous roads and about sharp hairpin turns. As a visitor I was forced to make a speech,

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and I looked back with sympathy to the sorrows of the board visitor when I was a schoolboy.

However, what they wanted was news, not oratory. English newspapers come to them but seldom, and French newspapers not every day. They were hungry to know what was doing. As a matter of fact, not all can extract intellectual nourishment from a French paper. Most of them have a little of that theoretical French instruction favored by our American schools which breaks down when one has definite use for the language.

On the way across the ocean there were daily drills in the common practical phrases used by the French Army. One of them was *La voiture est complète*—The wagon is full. Who has ever analyzed the psychology of a family joke? And why, among all the phrases they learned, did this one appeal to their sense of humor? At any rate, *complet*, pronounced French fashion and with French meaning, is the humorous by-word of the camp. If a man has drunk too much he is *complet*. If he has eaten enough, he is *complet*. And it always brings a laugh.

The practical work has its difficulties. Most of these men, as I have said, know how to drive ordinary touring cars. But to manage these big five-ton trucks, and on country roads, not city streets, takes practice and education. Like the officers down in their own special school, these men have been instructed in the anatomy and peculiarities

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of these automobiles—all of which were made in America, by the way.

The instruction here is less thorough than at the officers' school, but it is designed to keep them from fool blunders and to make them understand the reasons for breakdowns. They apply their knowledge on the roads. Three or four of Section A who had never driven any machine before, learned a little slowly and were replaced, for this initial venture to the line, by experts from Section B. One of these students tried to ram down the wall of a post office last week; and another had his machine bucking like a bronco until it collided with the machine just ahead of him in the column. Taking the hairpin turns is in general the greatest trouble to the beginners. To prevent stopping the convoy—the one unforgivable sin in French automobile transport—these turns must be made on regular speed, without stopping and backing. No man is passed for the Front until he can do this with certainty.

As I was writing this I heard a rumble outside on the road. I opened the canvas cover of the trailer. A dark line of *camions* was bumping past the trees. Daly, the Yale captain in the remote peace days of 1910, who will take out Section B when its education is finished, poked in his head to explain that it is a night run.

Near the fighting Front, as all the world knows, there are no headlights. They would betray you



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to the enemy. One must run in darkness, looking out for traffic with a kind of sixth sense. That takes practice, and every other evening the squad must make a night run, in battle conditions. The singers have gone to bed long ago. Also, the "evening hate" along the line has stopped. The silence of forests is over the camp. And now Tinkham has added a few remarks to the record of the day.

"You know," says Tinkham, "about every few minutes, it seems to me, I have been obliged to call this squad together to get something in the way of equipment fitted on them. To-night, just as they were breaking up, one of them said:

" 'Well, boss, I suppose in the morning we'll be called up to get measured for harps and halos!' "

### PARIS, Two Days Later.

The bugle turned me out of bed at five o'clock yesterday morning, blowing the old, familiar reveille of the American Army—"I can't get 'em up in the morning." It had turned out a beautiful day, and because a bright day is a good one for artillery observation the heavies were going along the Front. The water cart pulled round a turn of our pretty woodland road, and the two sections, in their undershirts, ran out with rubber collapsible washpans to get the means of morning ablutions.

This is a new camp, and the shower baths were not installed down the road until a few days ago;

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in the meantime the earlier arrivals, being university men and accustomed to bathing, got their first idea of the hardships of war. The camp is in a dry spot, except when it is raining, and the water has to be hauled by a foolish little tank cart, driven by a French Territorial infantryman and drawn by a shaggy gray pony. Each man gets his painful for his morning wash, and no more until the water cart comes again.

Assembly followed, and the ceremony of hoisting the flag—or rather two flags, for the Tricolor and the Stars and Stripes float side by side at the gates of the camp. The sections, drawn up separately, presented arms. In the meantime Fromage, the small, curly, coal-black puppy who is mascot to the camp, had roused from his slumbers upon noticing that there was something doing, and was going down the line biting feet as he passed, quite contented that they were so still.

And before the cook had ladled breakfast into the grub tins the whole wood was abustle with the business of preparation for departure. The departing squad was loaded, with luggage, into four empty *camions*, while four men of Section B, who needed the practice, were told off to drive. It had rained a little in the night, and the road through the wood was in bad shape, so that the leading *camion* stuck. The men of Section B had to run out and shove it free; which killed any fuss or ceremony there might have been about the depart-

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ure of the pioneer section for the Front and actual work.

I rode in the staff car with Tinkham and the lieutenant; Scully, wanting the practice, mounted the driver's seat of the leading *camion*, his leather-bound road map in hand, just by way of getting a little practice in following roads. Our car was parked in the fortified farm, halfway between us and the village.

I pause here to say that this is a region of fortified farms, and they give a peculiar color to this beautiful part of dear, suffering France. In old years, Northern France suffered continually from the barbaric invader, as she is suffering now. Also, there were robbers who preyed upon the rich farms of the country which was the granary of Europe. So the peasant proprietors grouped houses, sheds and barns about a courtyard and surrounded the whole thing with a thick, ten-foot wall, pierced by long loopholes for bowmen. The finest of them had watchtowers at the corners of the wall. Here and there the loopholes and bastions are still visible. In other farms, the old walls have fallen into decay, but the peasants, by the law of habit, have rebuilt them, though without the loopholes. There were no loopholes in the wall of this farm, but it kept the old form.

One or two batteries of artillery, shifting position, passed us on the road up. They were coming out from the line; their uniforms were soiled, streaked and faded, their horses showed need of



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the currycomb, one of the camp kitchens, smoking with the fire that was baking bread as it bumped along the road, had a hole through its stack. There was more artillery at the farm; a battery was finding quarters and parks for its guns, and the heavy, good-humored-looking peasant woman who works the place while her husband fights was running about making arrangements. Two little girls, of about four and six, tagged her, returning shy but friendly smiles to the advances of the soldiers.

Some errand took me for a minute to the farmhouse, flanked on one side by a carriage shed and on the other by a granary. In the little hallway stood a goat—a fat and stolid goat, who looked at me out of his wide-set, heavy-lidded eyes with neither hostility nor affection, and had to be pushed out of the way before I could get into the living room. To go ahead a few hours: When we came back to the farm late that afternoon we found four officers playing cards in the courtyard. One of them, with whoops of laughter, told us that when they went in to luncheon they found the goat lying under the table. It appears that he is the privileged animal of that farm.

Section B, which was going up to the lecture hall in the village for some instruction, was piling into a *camion*. The French *poilus* crowded into the courtyard to look at them with shy friendliness. I rushed out to photograph the group; whereupon they struck poses, as people always do under such

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circumstances. When my shutter had snapped, a soldier came out of the crowd and spoke to me in very good English. He had been a waiter in London before the war, he said; and would I do something for him? Nearly three years he had been in the army now, and had never been photographed with his comrades. Could monsieur send him a print? He would be glad to pay for it.

This happens nearly every time you take a photograph at the Front, and is a nuisance or a chance to do a great kindness, just as you look at it. For of course, such photographs will become valuable family heirlooms as the years go on. One can do no more welcome favor to a man at the Front. That old German camera is dropping to pieces in my hands; I tried night before last to repair it with a pair of pincers and a hammer which I borrowed from the toolchest of a *camion*, and only made it worse. But I hope it worked that time.

The lieutenant had picked the road to the new camp, and had purposely picked a bad one. Most of it was a mere dirt road, in strong contrast to the fine French highways that the army is keeping up with such pains in order that transport of supplies may not be hampered. But this one resembled a country road in the newly settled West. It would teach the drivers how to overcome obstacles such as they might meet at the Front, the lieutenant explained to me as we bowled along by side roads or, cutting in ahead of the *camion* trains, went before.

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So far as I have seen it, the work of instruction in the French Army proceeds on the theory of telling the man what to do and how to do it, and then letting him learn by his mistakes. After he has made the mistake the instructor takes him in hand and with a pleasant word or a joke sets him right.

The first incident occurred at a sharp hairpin turn on a road which climbed past a beautiful fortified farm, the loopholes and turrets still in place. The three leading drivers made it in pretty shape; the fourth and last turned too late and was forced to stop and back up. Confused by his mistake, he nearly backed too far, and all but went over a steep bank. The *camions* spilled lithe brown bodies; the section ran back and pushed him out. We stuck again, and had to be pushed out, on a muddy stretch near the top of a hill; but that, as the lieutenant informed the men, was not the fault of the drivers but of the road.

Over beyond the hill was a fair-sized town—gray, rambling, lined with rows of old elms and with solid stone walls over which the lilacs tossed. A *camion* or two was bowling down the road, bearing the sign of the Bee.

Those heraldic devices give variety to the monotony of the *camions*. Sometimes during the days of that battle of the *camions*, Verdun, the groups of sections took to painting devices on their sides so that they might be identified at a glance. It began with the four aces of a pack of cards, printed in red or black on a patch of white.



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The idea spread, and now there are hundreds of devices.

The transport service even grew artistically ambitious. There are the group of the Nurse, for example; that of the Jockey; and that of the Ballet Girl. These three designs are rather crude; but often the workmanship is good. The Cat's Head, for example, is both pleasing and whimsical. Perhaps the best of all is that on the group of *camions* that they use at the school—the Jumping Rabbits. Two anxious-looking little white rabbits, dressed in blue breeches and jumpers, are leaping a hurdle shaped like the letter M. It symbolizes, to the French mind, the manner in which the officers are putting the recruits over the jumps.

The men of the Bee smiled and bubbled with French excitement as our men came along; they took off their hats to the flag floating from the seat of the leading *camion*. We turned into officers' quarters and met the captain of the group to which Section A was about to add itself, the lieutenant who will have command of the Americans until Tinkham and Scully grow expert enough to go it alone. When more sections arrive, when the officers finish their course in the training school, there will be an all-American group officered entirely by Americans. That will be accomplished, and more, before these lines reach print.

The captain was a fine, gray-eyed gentleman, a business man before the war, a mighty hustler of motor transport since. The lieutenant, who was

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to take command, was a stocky, pleasant Frenchman, in the silk business before he was called to the army. He speaks, as he admitted on introduction, only theoretical English; but he added that he expected a great deal of practice in the next few weeks.

The men of the Bee had learned, somehow, that there was to be a little ceremony before the captain's quarters, and that they would get a chance to see the Americans. They found places behind a row of bushes, half of them with cameras. I walked back to a street where our men were lining up. It was one o'clock, and their chief emotion at this historic moment seemed to be an overwhelming sense of hunger. My one common observation on the soldiers of all nations is that they are always hungry. Fill them up, and they will eat again an hour later with appetite and thanksgiving. "Any line on the grub question?" they asked me out of the corners of their mouths as Tinkham formed the company.

So they were drawn up before the captain, and introduced. The captain made a speech, in English. He also speaks theoretical English. Once or twice he came to a full stop; on these occasions he turned to Lieutenant G——, who was standing by his side, said what he wanted to say in French, and got the English translation. This might have been ridiculous on the part of another man. On the part of a Frenchman it was perfectly fine and dignified.

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Having been photographed by all the cameras in sight, including that of the captain, the squad marched away. I sneaked up to the side of Hastings, of Stanford—my own university—and remarked:

“It’s a long way from Palo Alto.”

“It sure is,” said Hastings, keeping step and talking with his eyes forward. “Say, have you any notion when we eat?”

The lieutenant and I begged a basket luncheon from a headquarters down the road and ran back, eating as we went, by a more direct road, which took us through a French town famous in this war. It is under fire nearly every day; the night before, I remembered, the lieutenant had stopped his dinner to listen to the bombardment with the practiced ear of a modern soldier and to remark “That was an arrival—on Blank.” We passed the wreck of that arrival, and passed, too, hundreds of other houses battered or dented since the war began. But still women walked the streets with colored parasols raised against the sun, though signs here and there read: “Public shelter in case of bombardment.”

Beyond the town we ran parallel to a range of hills where lay the line; and on the edges of the next road beyond ours burst out now and then a geyser of black—it was getting its daily shelling. I mentioned that fact to one or two of the Section B men when I got back to camp. By dinner time a rumor had spread over camp that Section A had



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been under fire all the way up! Such is the mind of war.

I had a two days' permission. A journalist going into the war zone is supposed to have a chaperon. Usually an officer goes with him from Paris. In this case, since I was visiting a place where I could not learn any very deep military secrets, Lieutenant G—— was that chaperon. The greatest sin possible to a military chaperon is to let his charge overstay his leave. However, the French officers, together with Daly and Taylor in command of Section B, started a mightily entertaining symposium at dinner, and when we glanced at our wrists, warned by the lowering shades, we realized that the run to the train, some fifteen or twenty miles down the road, must be made in fast time.

As we pulled away I found that another French battery had bivouacked in our beautiful wood—tall, mature elms with fern underfoot. In passing, I caught one of those glimpses that make one long to be a painter. The evening shadows, thick under the trees, were a deep, mysterious blue. The uniforms, of lighter blue, seemed to blend with the softened gray-blue of the gun carriages, the camp kitchens, all the wheeled transport. The horses, scattered through the bivouac, were all bays, making reddish-brown spots—a study in blues and browns.

When we came out on the highlands we were looking across a deeply cleft valley, looking down

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on that fortified farm; and we could see why the freeholder of the Middle Ages picked that spot. It overlooked, it guarded that valley, which was doubtless his farm. And the whole landscape, valley and forest alike, was so thick with greenery, so bursting with fertility, that the sense of beauty in living things pressed against the heart until it hurt. And the lieutenant burst into a fine French enthusiasm.

“The most beautiful forest in Northern France!” he said. “When they told me to choose a site for the school I picked this. One has the right to enjoy himself while he lives—isn’t that so?”

In spite of furious driving we missed the train after all. The station was in a war-zone town—not a light showing anywhere, but packed with the activities of an army. There was no train, the gendarme at the station informed us, until five in the morning; also there was no hotel. But the five o’clock train was only the return trip of a train due to arrive at this terminus in a half hour. It would stay all night in the station. Would monsieur mind sleeping on the seat of a first-class compartment?

So I turned in, my raincoat rolled up under my head and a copy of *Le Matin* under my muddy feet to save the cushions. An hour later a French officer groped his way in and stretched out on the seat opposite. I suppose I snored, for I was wak-

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ened now and then by drowsy protests in French. I am sure he did, and he was wakened by drowsy protests in English. I asked him in the morning how he had slept, and he answered "Rotten!"—or its equivalent.



## CHAPTER VII

### WITH THE BRITISH FLYERS

BRITISH FRONT, June—

VISITING among the airmen reminds me remotely, somehow, of visiting a university athletic team in training quarters; for this, as the world should know, is the greatest sport of all. I went up this morning to a section working on a part of the Front at present very quiet, as the Front goes just now.

The camp stood on a fair stretch of level ground, just far enough from the trenches so that only the line of military balloons, swaying among the mists of the horizon, and the distant roar of guns, showed that we were near this eternal battle of the great line. Time was when airmen, the aristocrats of modern war, were housed in châteaux. Now most of these French country places have fallen to other uses; also, the air service has grown enormously. This camp was a collection of wooden shacks, comfortable enough and shipshape, but primitive, too.

Beside the quarters were the aërodromes, barn-like sheds, wherein stood ranged the great wasps of the air—for this was a fighting squadron.

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Mounted on the fastest piece of mobile machinery ever devised by man, the birdmen range the air daily in search of Germans—and a scrap.

Half a dozen machines were drawn up on the field as we arrived; and in the near foreground an aviator, caparisoned in his leather cap, was tuning up a new machine for a practice flight. Two mechanics were holding the wings, and the wheels were blocked by prismatic-shaped pieces of wood. The vicious propellers whirled in rhythmic beats, stopped, whirled again; the engine, droning like a swarm of gigantic bees, drowned out all conversation. Each time the propellers warmed to their work they tore up a cloud of dust that streamed away on the wind. The engine was running regularly now, without stops. I saw the aviator nod.

The prisms of wood, attached to cords, were jerked away from the front wheels; the mechanics, holding the wings from the rear, ran along, pushing for a few steps. The machine drew away from them, and taxied along the field. Half fish, half bird it seemed. Now its tail, shaped like that of a goldfish, was off the ground, and now—I had a genuine surprise: I have seen little of first-class aviation since a year ago, and I was not prepared for the rise—I might call it almost a jump—of this modern fighting machine. No sooner were its wheels clear than it seemed to shoot up; the motion was not the old, familiar soaring rise of the aëroplanes I had known, but a straight climb. He

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ran upward; he turned, banking at an angle that seemed perilous; he shot up again.

Another aëroplane had taken the air by now. It darted upward toward the course where the first was circling, and began to give it mimic battle—the maneuvers by which aviators try to reach position for a favorable shot. Round and round they circled, climbed, dipped. They were so high now that they were specks in the air. The first machine did a sudden flip; brought up above the other machine and behind it—“onto his tail,” the favorable position for aërial attack. Suddenly the other turned its nose earthward and began a whirling dive. The first followed; the second, coming suddenly to horizontal, turning its nose toward its rival—a perfect position for pouring in a burst of shots as the other passed. This was practice—the five-finger exercises of the fighting aviator, by which he keeps his hand and eye in trim against the perilous, heroic few seconds when he must really fight.

The flight commander strolled over, was introduced. He is a little, easy-mannered Englishman, with a clean-cut face; that small, short-cropped mustache, affected now by the British Army, revealed a firm mouth. Only his decorations showed that there was anything unusual about his military record. The French aërial service, as all the world knows, maintains the institution of aces. When a man has brought down five enemy machines he becomes an ace; and his



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score, as it grows, is mentioned in the daily communique. Now this would seem like swank to the English, and that is a deadly sin. This man, had he fought with the French, would have made himself an ace in one big aërial day, during which he brought down six machines.

However, when the conversation turned from commonplaces to aëronautics, he spoke like a craftsman, less of adventures in the air than of engines, horse power, wing spread, struts, speeds, the difficulty of knowing any aëroplane's practical capacity by its trial record, the various methods of rigging machine guns. We strolled from hangar to hangar as he talked; and we stopped long while he expatiated on his machine shop. It was housed in a set of motor *camions*; and here half a dozen mechanics were toiling with drills or files.

"The idea is," he said, "to send up every machine in perfect order. If anything goes wrong in a fight it's the difference between a German plane down and a British plane down."

I recalled then that every machine in the hangars had looked bright and new as when it first come from the shops. There was a gun room over among the sheds; there, as soon as a plane comes back from the Front, an expert gunsmith dismantles the machine guns and puts them in the most minute order. A jammed gun loses many a fight, as we were to learn a moment later.

For we strolled, as we talked, into a long shed,

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with a board table along its center, a telephone desk in the corner, and many maps on the plain board walls—the regulation appearance of a headquarters. A bench ran down one side of the room, and on it sat seven or eight lean, blond, clean-cut British youths in khaki. It was the watch, waiting on call against emergencies of the air.

Phil Simms, being an American and therefore of witty imagination, smiled. “Bell hops, waiting for a call to Z 26,” he whispered. The row of aviators, being Britons and shy, shifted their legs and looked embarrassed. But one rose from the bench and approached the captain, saluting. He was breathing heavily; his eyes were bloodshot.

“Oh—you’ve just landed!” said the captain easily. “Had a fight, didn’t you?”

“Yes, sir,” said the boy all in a breath. “Squad of four German planes attacked me and Brown-Jones. [This name, of course, is disguised.] My gun jammed after three shots, and I had to hurry back. Brown-Jones brought one down, I think. At least he appeared to be out of control when he dropped into the cloud below.”

“Oh—er—Brown-Jones back?”

“No, sir. But I saw him crossing our lines behind me.”

“Engine trouble, I suppose. Doubtless we’ll hear from him later. What about the other three Huns?”

“They showed evidences of extreme terror, sir!”

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“Very well.”

The boy settled back onto the bench, where he nonchalantly borrowed a cigarette from his neighbor.

Just let your imagination play on this, as mine did. Back from a fight fifteen thousand, eighteen thousand, feet in the air—a thing merely dreamed of three years ago, realized only a year ago—an adventure beyond precedent. And here it was, treated as part of the day’s work!

The two ’prentice airmen had come down from their aërial play as we stepped into the field. The mechanics were trundling the machines back to the hangar, and the aviators, in their grease-streaked working uniforms, were walking toward us, swinging their leather caps as they walked. I said something about the show they had given us, and the captain remarked easily:

“Yes, they’re going to be good, both of them—but of course, they’ve only recently arrived. Sorry I hadn’t McPherson here. [I disguise this name also.] No one in the corps can do more with an aëroplane than McPherson. He’s been at it two years—and he lives for that machine. I say!” he proceeded on an after-thought, “Could you fellows come over here day after to-morrow at blank o’clock? The patrol will be coming in, and if you’ll say you’ll come you may see them do stunts before they land. Where did you Americans get that jolly word ‘stunts’? I’m sure I don’t know what we should do without it.”



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Our *kultur*, I perceive, is spreading—possibly because our Canadian cousins have helped. Five years ago, if you had told an Englishman that you were up against it he would have stared at you. Now the whole army uses that phrase. Yesterday in reading John Galsworthy I discovered one of his characters saying, “It’s up to you”; which is pure poker language. In their humorous moments—and believe me, doubting Americans, they are a really humorous people—they say, “some girl!” or, “some fight!” Elsie Janis, I believe, is responsible for that.

We mounted our automobile and drove on, in sight of the balloon line, through a country where all the complex business of war is mixed inextricably with the simple business of a resident population, to luncheon at the flying-field of a reconnaissance squadron. One of the officers, as we entered quarters, grinned broadly at me and greeted me with:

“I’ll bet you don’t remember me, Bill!”

A man whom you have known in civilian clothes looks strange sometimes when he appears in his uniform. I had to confess I didn’t, until he gave his name. At the beginning of the war I had talked over with him his entrance into the British Army. He was an American; but, like many other young Americans living abroad, he had seen what this war meant and where his duty lay. He entered the artillery, got a commission, and served all through those hard days when the few British

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guns were working on a terribly scanty allowance of shells. Catching the fascination of the air, he got himself transferred to the Flying Corps in the period before fighting machines were much differentiated from observation machines. He stuck to the older branch of aviation. For efficiency and bravery he has been decorated and promoted until he is second in command of this squadron.

In this offhand fashion I have been hailed time and again, from Dunkirk to Monfalcone, by young men in British brown, French blue or Italian gray, who proved to be American citizens, pioneers in our war for democracy.

We saw no fancy stunts at this aërodrome. The broad-spreading, strong-lifting observation plane, carrying two passengers and armed fore and aft, is not made for that work. We did see, after much technical gossip at luncheon, a demonstration of air work on its scientific side. For those big planes are the eyes of the battle line; the fighting planes, to stretch a metaphor, its eyelids, guarding the eyes.

In buildings behind the aërodrome was what amounted to a suite of offices and laboratories, where all devices of photography, chemistry and mathematics are bent to making the observation work useful to the artillery, which is the strong right arm of the battle line. Of that I may not speak in detail; but the results are marvelous.

The work of running an observation plane requires not only coolness, courage and knowledge

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of aviation; it requires also a kind of scientific instinct and great judgment. The photographs and records that I saw there to-day, combined with those that I inspected yesterday at general aviation headquarters, fixed in my mind one fact which I may be allowed to record: Bombing is growing accurate—at least among the Allies. These observation planes, what with their size and lifting power, are used also for bomb-dropping. Two years ago we used to say that the thing to do in an air raid was to find the place that the enemy was trying to hit, and run there. He was sure to hit anything except the spot at which he aimed. That era is past; practice and mechanical improvement are making this operation accurate.

### BRITISH FRONT, Next Day.

I came up here to complete the facts for a certain article. I found last night at dinner that I could get my leave to the Front extended for a day, which gives me just time to finish the article and leave it with the censor before I go back to Paris. In the present uncertain condition of the mails, that means a gain of several days. So I have passed up a chance to go in sight of the "show"—the universal British slang for the fighting Front—have borrowed the typewriter of Percival Phillips, who has gone to Paris on a two-day leave, and am just finishing a writing day.

The sound of an automobile horn outside made me look up a few minutes ago, to perceive Philip



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Gibbs coming back from the advanced line, where I know he has been looking into the story of a small action which occurred a day or two ago. It recalled to me, also, the strangeness of my surroundings.

This old château, gray and formal, unfurnished with anything resembling a piazza, but very light within because of the high French windows, is owned by a family which once held the High Justice, the Middle and the Low. Memories of former greatness, such as family portraits, emblazoned coats of arms and old Royalist engravings—Marie Antoinette ascending to heaven, for example—decorate the walls. Though the present inhabitants are mainly Protestant, the crucifixes and sacred images of the older faith look down on them from all the bedroom walls.

As for furniture, the rooms have been stripped to bare necessities, but the chairs and tables are of antique carved oak. Also, the gentleman's library, filled with French classics, invites whosoever cares to read. On top of all this is the dunage of fifteen or twenty very busy out-of-doors young men. I tried this morning to make an inventory of the articles that littered the tables, the old carved chests and the balustrade of the wide reception hall. I gave it up; but the list included battered trench helmets, leather coats—relics of the winter campaign—gas masks, typewriter covers, field glasses, rain-coats, and such souvenirs of battle as shell cases, Prussian helmets, German

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signs from captured trenches and broken rifles. In the midst of this confusion a sergeant, his gun beside him, sat transmitting orders at a telephone which rested on the stand where, of old, visitors used to leave their cards.

Before my window a long gravel avenue stretches out to a solid, gray-stone lodge gate and to a square-clipped box hedge which divides the estate from the road. Past that piece of hedge a moment ago gray motor lorries were flashing. The drive is bordered with magnificent trees; and all about us, acre on acre, lies as pretty a wooded estate as I have seen in France. The fact that the lawn grass grows long—for no one has time to mow it—only makes this wood greener. A brook, so level and quiet that it looks like a canal, threads the park; it is green also with a tangle of water weed, in which, if you steal softly through the bushes that line the bank, you can see the trout resting and waving their fins. One of the older British correspondents found a fishing rod in a village near by, and has been angling for them—without luck, because he cannot get the proper kind of fly.

From the great stripped salon below comes a sound of scuffling feet. Phil Simms, of the United Press, and Bobbie Small, of the Associated Press, are playing badminton. They, together with Percival Phillips, of the London *Express*, represent the American contingent up here. Badminton serves in place of tennis for exercise between the

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hot periods of battle. This conservative family has not been caught by the modern French rage for sport, and there is no tennis court on the place.

From this attractive and gracious little halting ground in the midst of war their motor cars carry them, together with their escorting officers, to the farthest reaches of the line. Times have changed for correspondents since the early period when every one went under military arrest now and then for being found where he shouldn't be—the only way to get the story. Now these regularly assigned correspondents, men of proved honor, go about where they please; the censorship takes care of the rest. And daily they come back from Armageddon to this quiet little haven, from such scenes as neither they nor any one else who ever wrote can possibly convey—so inadequate is the human device of language!



## CHAPTER VIII

### McPHERSON DOES STUNTS

PARIS, Two Days Later.

THE captain of Squadron —, British Scout Planes, kept his engagement to give us a show. We foregathered on the field under a perfectly clear sky, with a general, his aid and a major in the Flying Service—also invited guests. News of the event must have got abroad in the French village near by, for long before the first plane of the returning patrol was signaled as a dot above the horizon a crowd of women, children, boys and old men was hanging over the fence that surrounds the flying field. The dot grew bigger, more dots appeared, and presently the fleet of little fighting planes was buzzing and darting close overhead. A double-seater reconnoissance plane, about to fly an officer over to headquarters, took the air at this moment. It soared where the others darted; it seemed like a dove in a flock of swallows.

Yet these vicious little fighting machines, evolved to perfection only within the last year, reminded me more of insects than of any bird that flies—insects with a bite and a sting. They seem all body, so great and powerful are their engines

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in proportion to the rest of their structure. The fuselage, that elongated part of an aëroplane that runs between the pilot's seat and the tail, has a saucy upward curve, such as you see in the body of a mosquito. In fact, they resembled mosquitoes more than anything else that flies: gigantic mosquitoes, short-winged mosquitoes, fast mosquitoes—incredibly fast. For most of them, at this moment, were doing, in their forward rushes, at least two miles a minute.

“There—he's going to loop!” said the flight commander, as the leading plane came overhead. The nose flipped—he was riding upside down—he was level again—he was darting off at another angle. The second plane in line began to loop the loop sidewise, rolling over, and without seeming loss of speed, as a horse rolls over when turned out to pasture. In the far sky two machines were playing with each other like puppies, one making rapid *virages*, the other following, clinging to the course in a series of whirls with its own wing tip as a pivot. It was like watching a three-ring circus. No sooner was your eye attracted by an extraordinary maneuver than a quick, English “Would you look at that!” from the general or his aide turned your attention to another quarter of the heavens.

The star airman, whom I have called McPherson, had not yet appeared, as I learned from the conversation all about me. I could trace, also, a little note of anxiety.

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In these days of increasing war in the air, a squadron seldom goes over the German lines without having a brush of some kind. Once the major remarked, with an appearance of nonchalance, "I don't see McPherson yet!" and the captain added in his carefully controlled voice: "No; he does seem to be a little late; but he's doing a special job."

In the meantime they spoke of him and his technic as the coaches of a football team might have spoken of a popular star half back. Just past twenty-one, he was, "And, by Jove, do you know I missed his birthday last week—we should have given him a dinner!" said the captain. He had been flying nearly two years now, and he would rather do stunts with that machine than anything else in the world.

"There he is!" said the captain as a speck cut the low horizon mists. With his special trained senses he had recognized McPherson's flying before any of us untrained earth-men could make out anything except an aëroplane.

The show above us went on. A flock of little birds flopped and darted past us. What pikers they seemed! And now McPherson had joined the rest. It took no expert eye to see that he was king of this fleet. He looped, he rolled, he did *virages*, he rose; and suddenly the nose of his plane turned straight toward the earth. Down he fell, a thousand feet, like Lucifer from heaven, his plane revolving as lazily as an autumn leaf re-



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volves on a light wind. It righted itself not two hundred feet above the ground, darted at incredible speed, shot upward. It was circling now above our heads; suddenly its nose turned straight down again—he was diving, and onto us. We stood, watching the bulk of his machine grow greater. Nearer and nearer it shot, until the whirring tractor propeller blew wind in our faces.

We knew it was a stunt; and yet to stand there and watch a steel engine falling upon you from the skies took the same kind of nerve which it takes to hold your hand against a pane of plate glass while a snake strikes from the other side. He was on us, fairly on us, when his plane flattened its course with a quick snap; I felt that by jumping in the air I could have touched his fuselage as it passed overhead. He rose a little, dipped again, and a moment later he had dropped his wheels to a perfect landing and was taxi-ing along the ground. The rest of the patrol was landed by now. Breathing a little heavily, from the change of altitude, they came over and we were introduced.

Lean, trained men in the best athletic age, they looked tired, wrung; save for the absence of bruises they might have been a football team which had just finished a strenuous match. That nervous strain of flying must be taken into account, they tell me, when dealing with aviators. That is why they are so much better quartered than other troops, why they are excused from much military routine work, and why they get frequent leave.

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They are watched carefully for signs of nervous breakdown. When these appear the aviator goes for a still longer leave—until his nerves are straightened out.

One of them, a slim, straight youth in a once-smart uniform now spotted with oil—his working clothes—hailed me in American slang, which came, oddly, through a half-British accent, “I’m an out-burst of Butte, Montana,” he said; “and it’s sure good to see a Yank!”

McPherson came forward, a clean-cut youth with a fine Celtic face—smooth, sun-browned complexion, high cheek bones, full red lips—he might have been either Highland-Scotch or Irish, I thought, but certainly Celtic.

I saw more of him at dinner that night, where he spoke with much youthful wisdom concerning aëroplanes and air-fighting, but said little of his own adventures except to remark that you got a brush, now, almost every time you went over; in fact, he had fought a drawn bottle in the air during that very patrol from which he came home to do stunts for the visitors. The major, on the other side, put in his word now and then; he was keen to see Americans in the flying service, he said. We were sportsmen, and to fly well takes a sportsman. The day before, a very great British authority on flying had spoken to the same effect. Being a Briton, he had arranged his world by classes.

“In the upper classes it is the horseman or the

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big-game hunter who makes a practical flyer," he had said; "and in the lower class, what we call a bicycle hog. You know the term? The little fellow who goes out on a bicycle or a motorcycle and delights in desperate speed and close chances. When anything goes wrong you see him beside the road with a cigarette in the corner of his mouth, making his own repairs!"

In addition to being sportsmen, the major said we were inventive and self-reliant. The Canadians were an example of what our continent could do; and he grew epic on that subject.

The senior officers withdrew for an evening over their military papers. Alone with the youngsters, Buck, the American, began to slang me in our own argot; and I slanged him back—to the bewilderment, and sometimes the joy, of the English. Now and then we had to translate—as when Buck accused me of pulling a bonehead play. How could you explain to people who do not know baseball? Also, there was song; and we taught them the riotous Western ditty, Hallelujah, I'm a Bum.

The sound of a gun, then of many guns, stopped the singing. We ran out. One edge of the moonlit sky was aquiver; now and then the horizon was streaked with the course of a tracer shell. Our anti-aircraft guns were at work. A bomb raid? But the Germans at whom the British gunners were sniping must have been on a business more secret than that, for no bombs fell; and presently the guns stopped.



## McPHERSON DOES STUNTS

PARIS, June 11th.

I was walking this morning in that unromantic district of wholesale business houses which lies behind the Palais Royal, when I heard shouts. I looked up and caught a panorama of a thief chase which reminded me, at first glimpse, of a comic drawing. A short thickset man, very fast on his feet, was running away. Far behind him ran two policemen, holding their stocky little swords straight up and shouting at the top of their voices. Behind them toiled the populace, mostly soldiers. Responsive to the shouts, the men along the sidewalks darted out and snatched at the fugitive. He dodged like a running half back. A good stiff football tackle might have stopped him, but these assistants of the law merely clutched at his arms, and he evaded them easily. He had come now to the rear of a truck. The truckman jumped down and confronted him. As he dodged to one side a soldier who had rushed out from a café caught him by the collar. He was wrenching away, when the truck driver tripped him up. Down they went, all three together. An instant later the two policemen had fallen on top of the pile.

I had been tagging along, doing the best I could to keep up. When I arrived, the policemen were just snapping the handcuffs onto his wrists. He was a young, vigorous man, very dark of hair and eye. His skin at this moment had a waxy pallor. The policemen never addressed him as they tested out the handcuffs and led him away. I was struck,

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too, by the silence of the crowd; they did not chatter and bubble as Parisian crowds usually do in excitement; they were grave and grim. I turned to a little *poilu* beside me.

“What has he done?” I asked.

“A German spy! A *Boche!*” said the soldier.

I smiled to myself, putting this down to spy madness. Nevertheless, I noticed a moment later that two officers had joined the policemen and were walking on either side of the group. The procession, still very grave, passed on to a police station, disappeared.

A group of women stood on the pavement outside of the station, and one was talking in low, tense tones, appropriate to the drama of the situation.

“Through that window there,” she said, pointing to a window some six feet above the pavement, “I saw him jump. They were examining him; they had confronted him with proofs, and he leaped. I saw him—leaped like a cat, *mesdames*—ah, it is the end of him!”

And I have no doubt that I witnessed this morning the act that sealed a death warrant.

PARIS, June 12th.

Mrs. L——, an American volunteer nurse, came in late and laughing, this evening, to the restaurant where she had a dinner appointment with us.

“I was delayed,” she said when she caught her

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breath, "because I've been in the jolliest Parisian row! Listen!"

A noise like the mob in "Julius Cæsar" proceeded from without.

"What's the matter?" I asked.

"They've been measuring the petrol!" said Mrs. L——; and she fell to laughing again.

It appears that she drove up in a taxicab to the door of the restaurant, and found a crowd surrounding another cab. In its center were the aged chauffeur—all chauffeurs are aged now—and a *poilu* loaded with haversack, knapsack, helmet, gas mask and little home comforts, together with his wife and mother. The *poilu* had demanded that the chauffeur take him at once to the North Station, for it was near train time, and the chauffeur had refused on the ground that he wanted his dinner.

"But if you don't, I lose the train, and I shall be arrested for exceeding my leave!" shouted the *poilu*.

"My husband will be disgraced!" cried the wife.

"My son will be ruined!" wailed the mother.

"But I cannot—I am out of gasoline," said the chauffeur.

"Why didn't you tell me that at first?" said the *poilu*, transfixing him with cold French suspicion.

"Yes! He is right! The chauffeur has deceived him! To prison with him! What a shame—and he is a soldier!" roared the mob.



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“But I have no gasoline,” said the chauffeur in weak defense, backing up against his machine.

At this moment Mrs. L——, with her own special tact and readiness, came through the crowd.

“Monsieur,” she said. “I solicit the pleasure of offering you my taxicab.”

“A thousand thanks,” said the *poilu*, taking advantage of her offer at once. “As for that variety of an onion, that sort of a camel, that species of a pig—I leave him to the justice of Frenchmen!”

The *poilu*, his kit and his family, drove away, waving thanks to their rescuer. The crowd, much reënforced now, backed the chauffeur against his tonneau, while a boy, who claimed to be expert in such things, opened the tank and measured with a stick.

“He has twice enough to take him to the Gare du Nord,” he announced, holding up the stick.

At this point the police arrived, squelched the disturbance with that mysteriously effective tact which the Parisian policeman has to learn, and sent the chauffeur, pale, shaking and chastened, on his way.

The independence of the chauffeur is one of the minor irritations nowadays. With the present restrictions on rapid transit, even people in very moderate circumstances must take taxicabs now and then, in order to keep engagements. And the Parisian taxicab, with its minimum charge of fifteen cents, is not a great strain on the purse. But

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at present there are not nearly enough taxicabs to go round—or rather, there is not nearly enough gasoline. Consequently the chauffeur is a very arrogant person, especially at about mealtime, just when there is the greatest general demand for taxicabs.

When you signal a taxi with the vacant sign up on its meter, at between twelve and one or between half past six and half past seven, the chauffeur makes a gesture which conveys "In which direction do you want to go?" You signal the direction. If the address happens to lie in the neighborhood of the restaurant where the chauffeur eats, he graciously slows down and lets you aboard. But Paris is a large city, with many addresses and many chauffeurs' restaurants, so the chances are that your intentions do not coincide. In that case he lets out his speed and points genially to his mouth to show that he is going to luncheon. He does this pleasantly, but firmly. Standing on the Rue de Rivoli last week, with a procession of vacant taxicabs whirling by, I signaled seventeen before the eighteenth kindly consented to favor.

The hit of a current Boulevard review is a taxicab turn, with the low comedian as the chauffeur. He is signaled by a dude.

"Where does Monsieur wish to go?" asks the comedian.

"To Montmartre," said the fare.

"Ah, no!" responds the comedian. "It is al-

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ways necessary for the client to have an engagement at the place where the chauffeur lives!"

PARIS, June 13th.

Pershing came yesterday. The American newspapers must be full of his welcome, so I shall not describe it except to say that I have never seen the like for spontaneous, unstimulated enthusiasm. However, the Frenchman, even in his most serious moments, must have his joke; and a little episode of that really glorious occasion may have been missed by the other reporters.

As Pershing's automobile ran slowly down the Boulevard des Capucines, with a dense crowd going mad along the pavement, a *poilu*, in a worn trench uniform turning from horizon blue to a kind of rusty green, leaped onto the running board. He was a little gamin of a *poilu*, a natural comedian; the kind of soldier who keeps his company laughing in the face of death. Standing on the running board he took all the applause unto himself. He bowed; he raised his cap; he threw kisses at the pretty girls; he made pantomime of addressing the multitude in impassioned oratory. Somewhere near the Madeleine a shocked policeman removed him—still good-natured, still pretending that this was part of the honor conferred upon him by the adoring multitude.

Joffre shared honors with Pershing—one of the few occasions when the people have had a chance to acclaim the splendid old victor of the Marne.



## McPHERSON DOES STUNTS

We used to say here, when America was making such a fuss over him, that we'd like a chance to see him ourselves.

The truth is that Joffre, for diplomatic purposes, keeps himself as much as possible in the background. France, after its experience with the Bonaparte family, fears always the Man on Horseback—the military victor whose popularity shall overthrow the Republic. Now only one man in France could possibly occupy such a position to-day—that same likable old victor of the Marne. Joffre, unfortunately, is as plain as an old shoe. He does not care for glory; he has no political ambition; he is only a soldier, deeply interested in his profession, burning with zeal to get victory for France. If he sought the acclaim of the populace the whisper might circulate that he wanted to be the Man on Horseback; and so he keeps to himself and to his work.

The selfish and personal reason why the French welcome American aid with such enthusiasm came out in a little remark of a Parisian girl standing beside her mother and waving her handkerchief at Pershing, who was bowing from a balcony of the Hôtel de Crillon: “Ah, now perhaps we'll have papa back!”

It seems generally understood—on what ground of reality I do not know—that the American units, as they go to the Front, will replace the older men of the French Army—the last line of Territorials. When France entered the war she mobilized every

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man up to forty-five years old. In the military plans of that period these old fellows—old at least for soldiers—were expected to do merely auxiliary work, such as guarding bridges and bases of supplies. But the war brought an unprecedented drain on man power; before long some of them were holding front trenches. A body of these Territorials sustained and repelled the first shock attack at Verdun.

The war is nearly three years old, and those who entered the army at forty-five are now reaching forty-eight—and still they fight on. One feels a peculiar pathos in the sight of these old fellows at the Front—pleasant, gray-haired Frenchmen, a little thick in the waistline, looking like anything but soldiers. Fighting age being athletic age, they serve only in default of better. A Parisian newspaper, discussing this phase of the manpower problem, declared the other day that a whole company of these older Territorials, put at the job of road making in the districts where German shells are constantly tearing up the military highways, will do the work of twenty professional road makers—and no more.

On the other hand, these old fellows, experienced mechanics or commercial men or farmers, would be of greater value in the civilian activities of France than almost any men who could take their places. A peasant forty-seven years old, with his experience on that home acre which he has cultivated all his life, can get more out of the

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soil than any newcomer, no matter how young and vigorous. And in certain districts of fertile France a weed-choked soil cries out for cultivators. Already the young *camion* drivers of the American Field Sections have replaced hundreds of old farmers—too old to do satisfactorily the work of bucking a five-ton truck up to the guns—and the army has sent them back to their farms.



## CHAPTER IX

### THE FOURTH

PARIS, July 5, 1917.

THE municipality of Paris decreed no public holiday to celebrate this most glorious of all Fourths, but the populace made it a holiday on their own account, adjourning business almost universally during the hours when armed American troops marched from the Invalides, where Napoleon lies among the relics of his armies, to the Picpus Cemetery, where Lafayette is buried. Never, not even on France's own national holiday, have I seen such crowds in Paris; in fact, they surprised the police, who at no time were able to keep perfect order.

By choice I wandered on the wide and busy Rue de Rivoli, instead of crowding for a place at the ceremony before the Invalides. Half an hour before the battalion arrived, the police were in trouble—they could not keep a permanent way open. The tactful and argumentative French *sergent de ville* who kept guard before my section of the crowd would push us back and hurry on to another section. Then the chatty little old Frenchwoman who stood beside me would remark that a

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meter more or less made little difference, and would take both that meter and another. We would all follow like sheep, and the *sergent* would have his work to do over again.

A gasp of breath in the crowd and then a burst of hand-clapping turned my vision to the right, where the arcaded Hotel Continental borders one side of the street and the Tuileries Gardens the other. An *aéroplane*, a fast, buzzing, light *chasse* machine, was skimming the tree tops above the gardens. It took a perilous *vrille*, it looped the loop so low down that the aviator's head seemed to graze the branches, it darted over the roof of the hotel, it shot back above the street, where it performed another series of mad maneuvers. It seemed—and the aviator was doubtless trying for that effect—like a great bird drunken with joy.

Under it the crowd was surging; and then we could make out men in horizon blue—the escorting battalion of French infantry, veterans just from the trenches, and moving with the easy swing of veterans. Behind them I saw a surge of the crowd and heard a rattle of clapping hands. I could make out a line of horsemen in khaki and slouch hats, which emerged from flowers. A rain, a bombardment of bouquets and garlands was falling upon them from the balconies. Those that fell nearest, the horsemen—officers of the regimental staffs—were throwing back. And behind them—the marching infantry.

That was the last I saw of the procession as a

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whole. For at this point the police gave it up and the crowd broke for the Yankees. I went with them. Battered, buffeted, struggling, I gained at last the edge of one rank and found myself walking arm in arm with a stolid but pleased Indian of the ——th Infantry. Before me and behind me every file closer had his left arm linked with some one—if he was lucky, a girl. Along both edges a benevolent riot was proceeding—the populace of Paris struggling to lay hands on them, to pass them flowers. Their belts, their shoulder straps and their gun butts were gardens by now.

In time I gave up the struggle, renouncing my Indian to two delighted girls and a little French soldier who was escorting them, and let myself be carried along on the outskirts. Now and then a weary perspiring policeman would make a dash and try to force us to the sidewalk; it was like trying to sweep back the sea with a broom. I found myself presently walking with my shoulder under the arm of a nice old French gentleman who had noticed the American flag in my buttonhole and wanted to express affection for something American, even if it was not a soldier.

“But why are they looking so serious?” he asked. “My faith! With all this, they should be glad!”

“It’s our way!” I responded. “That shows how much they’re touched. If any one of these boys was alone, now, he’d be crying his eyes out!”



## THE FOURTH

“You’re much like the English after all, aren’t you?” said the nice old French gentleman.

At about that point where the solemn tower which rang out the fatal Saint Bartholomew’s day overlooks the pleasant ribbon of the Rue de Rivoli, I gave it up, caught a taxicab and hurried to the region of the Picpus Cemetery, hoping to anticipate the crowds and find a vantage point. On the way I passed army *camions* loaded with policemen—all the reserves in Paris. Either the authorities feared that the crowd would hurt itself in its joy or they were acting on that love of a fixed and orderly program which marks the police of all nations. They had their labor for their pains. At the Place de la Nation I could get only a roosting place on the pediment of a statue, fifty yards from the line of march; and by the time our troops arrived, the line resembled a procession less than it did a flood. All you saw was a tinge of khaki, dotted with the high colors of flowers, flowing like the central current of a stream of black, white and blue.

All that day America roamed the streets, getting acquainted; everywhere were groups of French *poilus* trying to talk to groups of American soldiers, and accomplishing something with the help of gesture and facial expression. Canadians and “Imperial” Tommies were fraternizing also; one group on the boulevards consisted of two American soldiers, one American sailor, three French aviators, two Canadians, a Ru-

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manian and a Portuguese. Late in the afternoon I found a seat at a café in the Bois; at the next table two American bluejackets were holding discourse concerning points of interest with the waiter, who spoke English. I butted in.

“What are you doing here?” I asked by way of opening conversation.

“Well, it’s this way, bo,” replied the nearest sailor in a South Chicago accent. “You see, the blank Kaiser he was shootin’ up merchant ships with submarines—any old kind of ships. And our President says ‘Cut it out, see! If you don’t we’re goin’ to start something.’ So the Kaiser cut it out. But after awhile he saw he was losin’, so he sent word to the President, ‘The lid’s off—see! Makes no difference what a ship is; if she’s found monkeying round the French or English coast, she gits it—see!’ And the President says ‘All-right, all-righty. Then we fight—see!’ So we declared war on Germany—we been at war two months. And we’ve got troops over here—see! That’s what I’m doing here—helped to bring ’em. And we’ve got ten million soldiers—that’s right. Everybody’s got to fight whether he wants to or not. And we’re going to lick the blank Kaiser—see!”

At this accurate synopsis of the news I laughed—I couldn’t help it. And I thought for a moment he was going to punch me.

“Say,” he roared, “do you think I’m stringing you!”

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Last night under my window on the Rue des Pyramides occurred a jolly little impromptu ratification of the new alliance. A group of American soldiers had been dining in a private room of the restaurant across the way. When dinner was finished they burst into song—"The Star-Spangled Banner." It must be admitted that their teamwork was ragged and even their individual performance gave cause for criticism; but at any rate they sang with zeal. The window was open and a burst of applause came from the street below. The Americans crowded to the window; the populace, rapidly filling up the street, was clamoring for more.

The Americans tried "The Marseillaise." When they had finished, the French took it up and showed them how it should be rendered. By this time the Rue des Pyramides was blocked. The police, arriving and taking in the situation, tactfully cleared a narrow passage for traffic and remained to see the fun. When next the Americans opened it was the "Stein Song." Richard Hovey and Fred Bullard lived, and Bullard died, in the little Massachusetts town where I live of summers. Fine and valiant spirits both—how they would have loved to hear their own song on a night like this! The crowd came back with "Le Régiment de Sambre et Meuse," the immortal marching song of the French regiment. The Americans responded with "Old Black Joe," "Sewanee River," and a lot more of those sad American sen-



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timental ditties that always puzzle the French, who like to be happy when they sing. Then they tried "The Marseillaise" again; and an American, leaning out to the sheaf of flags that hung the window, kissed the tricolor amidst great applause from the crowd.

At about that moment, so I am told this morning, Brand Whitlock, who had come up from Havre to speak at Lafayette's tomb, strolled along. He was recognized from above and an American hailed him. He put up his hand with a gesture which showed that he wanted to enjoy the fun incognito. The crowd saw the gesture, however, and gathered round, begging him to translate. Just then the American chorus started "Oh, Didn't He Ramble," followed by "My Wife's Gone to the Country," and Whitlock, literary man even though he is, found trouble in expressing himself.

There had been formal meetings all day, with speeches and prom. cits. on the platform, but those, to my mind, were less significant than these sidewalk ratifications of the new alliance. Assuredly, we get on with the French!

PARIS, July —.

Last night I attended what I consider the most successful party in my social experience.

The *permission*, or leave, of the French soldier is usually for one week; and usually, also, it ends on one certain day of the week. Paris is not only

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the capital and metropolis of France, but also its railroad center. All the afternoon before the day of return, trains from the provincial towns are dumping soldiers into Paris. The trains for the Front usually start early in the morning. With the cafés closed at half-past nine, with the moving-picture shows running mostly in the afternoons in order to save lights, the men have nowhere to go. A year ago the platforms of the principal stations running to the north and east were congested all that night with soldiers, packed for the line, trying to get a little sleep on the hard concrete floors. The *poilu*, leaving the little heaven of home for the dirt, vermin, toil and danger of the trenches, found this night of discomfort hard to bear.

A few months ago a Frenchwoman of motherly heart, tireless frame and great executive ability took hold of this problem. She got some financial aid from Americans and fitted out several disused offices near the great station with cots and bedding. This gave the *poilu* a place to lie down and enjoy a comfortable night's sleep. With the help of our Red Cross and the Fund for French Wounded she went further than that. On the one night of the week when most of the soldiers come through from home to the trenches she has a party for them—a dinner, vaudeville turns by volunteer artists, and finally a distribution of bags of little presents made up in America.

We entered the great cellar room near the sta-

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tion, where the party was given, just when the first vaudeville artist was warming up to his work. Half of the soldiers still sat on benches, leaning across the pine dinner tables; the rest lolled on the cots, pushed back against the walls, where they would sleep after eleven o'clock, at which hour the party is sternly ended. The place reeked with smoke and the human smell; underneath the smoke-haze the company was a bank of rusty blue. After a few weeks of service the French uniform always begins to fade to a greenish hue, very businesslike. Brown haversacks, gray water bottles, blue and dented French helmets, gas masks in cases, hung festooned about the soldiers. Here and there was youth with the comeliness common to this comely race; especially I remember a big, clean-featured Alpine infantryman who drew the eye of every American woman in the room. These touched me less than the battered but stalwart veterans in their thirties or early forties—the lines of their faces as hard as furrows in steel, their clear eyes with an appearance of looking far away, and on their left arms the four notched chevrons which showed that they had fought at the Front since the very beginning—that they were veterans of Charleroi, the Couronne de Nancy or the Marne. What firm jaws they had! And what confident repose was there in their attitude as they leaned across the tables, laughing at the comedians!

I am sure that the artists—mostly, I believe, wedging in this engagement with their turns at



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the music halls--never performed to an audience more appreciative. A drunken-tramp act brought howls. Mrs. Roosevelt--an amateur introduced amidst thunderous applause as a cousin of the great friend of France--sang operatic selections with good voice. One of the best natural monologuists I ever heard--and he could sing, too--rendered "The Nights of Seville," a new popular song; the *poilus* joined in the chorus with enthusiasm, especially at that point where you imitate a guitar. Recalled, he composed a poem with the help of the audience--whenever he was stuck for a rime he asked for suggestions, which came in scores. And after each turn the *poilus* showed approval by that rhythmic clapping which amounts to the college yell of the French Army.

This is a new custom, started from I know not what remote trench. The rhythm is like this:

*Clap-clap Clap-clap-clap [fast]*  
*Clap-clap Clap-clap-clap [fast]*  
*Clap-clap-clap Clap-clap [fast]*  
*Clap-clap-clap [slow]*

They do it now at the Front whenever they wish to show approval or general joy--as when a company has made a neat attack or when delayed provisions arrive. If you wish to emphasize your feelings you do it again. For Mrs. Roosevelt, out of compliment to her singing, her distinguished relative and the new ally, they did it three times.

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An intermission was called by the chairman; and then came the real climax of the evening's entertainment: Madame, the presiding genius of the place, started for those big clothes baskets where the bags from America were stored, and returned with her arms full. The American ladies followed; and it began to look like Christmas.

These bags, usually gaudy little affairs of cretonne, had been packed on the sensible plan. The gifts in them were nearly all practical—safety razors, for example, pieces of toilet soap, shaving brushes, combs, sewing kits, safety pins, pocket mirrors, pen-knives, nail files. Always they contained a pair of stout socks, a wash rag and writing materials. By way of luxury there were mouth organs, chocolate tablets, jew's-harps and, in a few cases, chewing gum. I hope that the recipients did not try to swallow this strange confection!

For a few minutes there was almost silence as the *poilus* opened their bags and spread out the contents on the tables. Then babble broke out—jokes called from one table to the other, cries of approval. Again I say it was ridiculously like a set of small boys opening their Christmas stockings. We all have enough child in us to like little unexpected presents; and besides, the French have a special quality of enjoyment in childish things. A Turco from North Africa, with a clean-cut Arab face, held up a safety razor as I passed. It was the very thing he'd been wanting, he said in inde-

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scribably broken French; he had been shaving with a species of hoe; but would monsieur show him how it worked? So I sat down and explained. At the end of one table sat a stocky, battered old veteran with a blond mustache that drooped over his mouth like a sea lion's. He was sorting his pile over and over again, inspecting each object and then reinspecting it. One of the ladies passed an artilleryman who had drawn a be-ribboned pin cushion.

"I will save that for my little wife," he said; "it is too nice for me!"

"And where is your wife?" asked the American lady.

"In Lille," he replied. "If she is alive—I have not heard for nearly three years now. But I keep pretty little things like this for her."

We shall never know the full tragedy of that invaded region; and this incident brought out a story from one of the Americans who witnessed it.

When the Germans fell back last March there rode with the French cavalry, which pursued, a trooper who lived in that region. He learned, to his unspeakable joy, that his troop was to pass through his home town, in which, more than two years before, he had left his wife and daughter. With permission from his captain he fell out and rode to his home. It was burned; but by the gate stood a neighbor.

"Where are they?" he cried.



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“Gone!” said the neighbor; “the *Boche* carried them away!”

It must be said that the second part of the performance was less successful than the first; every one was busy inspecting presents and swapping. At a quarter of eleven the chairman adjourned the meeting; the *poilus*, as they rose, scrambled for the little American flags which formed the table decorations. I myself was very busy for the next quarter of an hour. The women in America who packed those bags had each inclosed a post card or a note, with name and address. Now, French and American handwritings differ in certain particulars, and many of the signatures were illegible at best. But the recipients, following that universal courtesy of the meanest Frenchman, wanted to acknowledge the gifts; so I had to spell out signatures in the French alphabet. At eleven sharp the inexorable madame clapped her hands to announce bedtime, and two policemen helped her clear the hall. As they filed out, hung like pack mules with the worn and stained paraphernalia of the trenches, each *poilu* held by a stubby hard finger a dainty little bag in flowered cretonne!

## CHAPTER X

### THE FOURTEENTH

RECOVERED ALSACE, July 13th.

It is nearly midnight, and sounds of exultant joy are still cleaving the clear mountain air without. To-day, in case you are weak on dates, is the eve of the French national holiday—the equivalent to our Fourth of July. This year recovered Alsace began the celebration on the afternoon before; and a party of American correspondents under proper escort has come up to see and to enjoy. I am billeted in a private house of this town, the hotel having been commandeered for another purpose. The arrangement is purely commercial, I believe. The army rents these rooms, using them for officers or visitors. But my reception was like that of an honored guest. Madame, my hostess, met me at the door with the maids drawn up beside her and welcomed me to her house and to Alsace. She saw personally that the room was ready; with her own hands she hung out the stars and stripes beside the tricolor from my balcony window. Finding that I was a writing man she placed another room on that floor, with a desk and writing materials, at my service.

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Since four o'clock, when we left poor, battered, war-torn Belfort, and especially since we raised our caps at the frontier between France and what was Germany from 1870 to 1914, it has been a day of beauty and of glory. I know grander mountains than the Vosges; I know of none more beautiful. Round-topped and yet precipitous, their slopes and ridges are thick with magnificent forests of pine and beech. White, tumbling streams traverse them everywhere. The villages have a peculiar and distinctive style of architecture. All the houses are high built, of substantial gray granite or stucco. The red-tiled roofs are very steep; and most of them are snubbed off at the ends of the ridgepoles by shorter roofs. Each town has in its central square a fountain with an ornamental pillar from which spurt two or four jets of water. Fountain pillars, church steeples, the cornices of the houses, the doors, the windows—floated now the tricolor or the red and white flag of old Alsace. The old men, who remember 1870, were sitting with the women at the doorways, enjoying a fine afternoon and the eve of a holiday. As we passed, they and the little boys beside them jumped to their feet and gave us the snappy, flourishing salute of the French Army.

We pulled at last into a larger town, where a major in charge of civil administration came forth to meet us. We dined with him and his staff; there were speeches. Then we called on the mayor. All the way down the street, hung with



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bunting as I have never seen city streets before, the people were gathering in their wartime Sunday best—the villagers in gay colors, the peasants in sober black, often in wooden shoes. The soldiers, as we passed, saluted with an extra flourish. Everything had a holiday air.

So as reviewing party we ranged ourselves on the balcony of the Hôtel de Ville. The mayor stood beside the major, center of the group; he wore, as the garments appropriate to such ceremonial in Alsace—a dress suit with a tricolored sash slashed across his shirt front. With us stood the cordial and venerable curé, the officers of the staff, and representatives of the town council. Then, heralded by two bands, civilian and military, came the procession.

At its head—a touch universal of a village celebration!—marched the fire department, Hose Company Number One. They wore their best dark-blue uniforms and brass helmets, polished like the sun, which glistened even in the twilight then gathering over valley and mountain. At least part of the fire department; for the rest were helping out those boys, too young for military service, and those veterans of 1870, too old, who made up the town band. It passed, tooting “The Marseillaise” with enthusiasm. Behind it came the military band. They halted before the Hôtel de Ville and played “The Marseillaise”—every one standing at salute. Then they rendered, as only a French military band can render it, that old Na-

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poleonic march which would make a wooden Indian want to fight: "Le Régiment de Sambre et Meuse."

I have heard the best British and American bands attempt this march; and it was not the same thing at all. There is always a point where a file of trumpeters come in with a fanfare. The trumpeters in this case were mostly magnificent blacks from the North African regiments. As they stood, trumpets poised, waiting to come in, their knees were beating time to the music. On the last bar the procession started again toward the public square. Behind the musicians the populace and the soldiers had fallen in, without any regular arrangement; and as the military band struck up another gay march every one began to dance. Soldiers, their arms linked with village girls, did the grand right and left. There were not enough girls to go round, so groups of *poilus*, linking their arms about each other's necks, performed giddy whirls. The populace flooded on to the town square. Down the vista afforded by the street we could see them dancing round and round the square, still following the band.

This was all real joy—not an artificial joy worked up for the occasion. And why not? Think of any American village you know, and imagine that the Germans had come, forty-seven years ago, to warp it into the mold of German *Kultur*. Suppose the public use and private teaching of the English language forbidden by

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law; suppose the young men forced to serve in the Prussian Army; suppose a thousand irritating restrictions, all directed toward making Germans out of the native American population. Then suppose that, two or three years ago, the American Army had come and taken the village back to its own. How it would behave on the Fourth of July!

There followed a reception in the Town Hall, wherein, with fine French formality, the dignitaries received us. At about this time the officers of the ——th Heavy Artillery arrived and made themselves known. They had been marching and toiling over the guns all day; so they wore their working uniforms, stained with grease and faded with old marches in the mud. They had come from a long period of fighting; this was their first night off for months; and plainly they were in a holiday humor. Nevertheless they were most insistent that we cut the formal program next day to see their new guns—"the best *Boche* crusher ever invented," they said.

The reception finished, I strolled over to a corner of the square, where the populace was standing in darkness listening to an impromptu soldier concert in a café. We are so near the Front that no lights whatever are allowed on the streets; I knew only by sense of sound and touch that we were in a crowd. Within, a little soldier, stained, tanned, hairy, was singing Faust in a beautiful, trained barytone voice—some professional, I suppose. Suddenly a match was struck near by, a



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cheerful young voice cried "There he is!" and I was carried away bodily by a dozen arms. The —th Heavy Artillery had captured me. They were going to have a party, they explained as they swept me along, and it was going to be a real party—the first they'd had this summer.

We rushed up to the second floor of the inn, where every one began calling for Maria, the head waitress, factotum and presiding genius of the place. As they stood on the landing—a dozen handsome, hard-muscled and extremely alive young Frenchmen in uniform—it occurred to me that all this looked like Act I, Scene 1, of a military melodrama. It looked still more so when, a moment later, Maria burst through the door. Maria was young, she was buxom, she was radiantly handsome. She had just been serving a late dinner and she carried a salad bowl and a wooden spoon. And plainly Maria was in a bad humor. She had hoped that business was over for the evening, as I heard her explaining to the porter later, and here we came to keep her up until heaven knew when.

Cheers greeted the entrance of Maria. A dark young devil of a Gascon with black eyes and a flashing set of teeth stepped up to salute her as ladies should be saluted in Alsace, where a kiss is the tribute due to beauty; and Maria hit him over the ear with the wooden spoon. However, she consented to light the oil lamp over the table and to serve us. By this time every one was jok-

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ing Maria; but she smiled only when she had her back turned. Scouts, sent out American-hunting, returned with Eyre, a New York newspaper man, and Hoffman.

So we seated ourselves, and sang. When Maria brought the wine, the ——th introduced its own special drinking song. The entire company, addressing itself to one man at the end of the table, asks him in song what he'd rather do than drink. He explains in a solo what he'd rather do than drink. Then the rest of the company sings a long chord, at the end of which he must have emptied his glass. So it went round the table. The battery pennon was brought in and set up with appropriate ceremonies. Then a tall young lieutenant rose and delivered what I take to be a burlesque on a stock lecture that the French officer gets as part of his military training.

“Discipline!” it began. “What is discipline? It is the higher force of armies. Very well then—with one finger—march!” Every one made one finger march by tapping the table. Then two fingers marched, then three, four and five; then the whole hand charged; then there was artillery firing with one fist and with both fists.

By now the glasses were jumping off the table; and suddenly I received a shock. I alone had my eyes on the door. It had opened; and there, with the mien of an outraged goddess, stood Maria. No one else saw her; the racket went on until the lieutenant ordered “Cease firing!” And then

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Maria spoke—one word of awful, portentous sarcasm—“*Fini?*”

It was eleven o'clock; out of deference to the feelings of Maria and the house the ——th Heavy Artillery rolled up its pennon with more ceremonies, and adjourned. Maria, rid of us, smiled sweetly over the balustrade as we said good night. I hope I haven't made this look like an orgy. As a matter of fact we had drunk about two glasses of champagne apiece. The French gentleman is not a drinking man in our sense. He does not need liquor to whip up his enjoyment of pastime in good company. Possessing a hair-trigger spirit of joy and song, he can grow convivial over a table of soda crackers.

All this, to conclude, happened very near to that yellow gash in the earth where Germany is still holding the greater part of Alsace. This town is within easy range of very moderately ranged guns; and though the Alsace Front is quiet just at present, we have been hearing distant reports all the afternoon.

PARIS, July 16th.

Though I had retired late on the eve of the Glorious Fourteenth, and though I slept the dead sleep of one who has been traveling in mountain air, I did not have to be called in the morning. At a villainously early hour drums began to beat and trumpets to blare on the streets outside. I poked my head out of the window. Soldiers, including a



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battalion of coal-black troops and another of *chasseurs Alpains*—those picturesque little men who wear the slouching *béret* on their heads instead of the stiff kepi—were gathering for the review. And everywhere the street was slashed with red; the young girls and the little girls had put on for the day the Alsatian costume. This consists of a red skirt, a black, tight, embroidered bodice, an embroidered apron, white stockings and a great wide black bow at the front of the head. Country folk were driving up in two-wheeled carts; over on the town square boys were putting the finishing touch on an open-air theater. I dressed, swallowed my coffee and got downstairs just in time for the review, which the mayor, the major and their official party witnessed from a tribune built of fresh boughs and twined with the tricolor, before the finest house on the square. The review over, we mixed with the crowd. We Americans in khaki were as great a show to them as a girl in full Alsatian costume would be to a New England town; we had to pose for every camera in the village and in the army. Then the bell of the solemn old church rang, and every one went over to attend a mass of thanksgiving. Alsatian fashion, the men all sat to right of the central aisle, the women to the left. So also the little boys were in the right transept and the little girls in the left. When in the pauses of the ceremony I looked to right and left I could see the heads of the little boys twinkling in perpetual motion and

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those of the little girls gently swaying. I was to think much and anxiously of those children within the next half hour.

I walked back from church with the mayor, who wore still the dress suit and the tricolored sash of his office. He looks enough like Bayard Veiller, our American playwright, to be his own blood brother. And he spoke of many things concerning that eclipse of Alsatian nationality in which he had dwelt since his youth.

The native Alsations speak a dialect rather more like German than French, but still as incomprehensible to a German as to a Frenchman. Though the offense of speaking French was never made absolutely illegal in that part of Alsace, it was frowned upon. Teaching the French language, on the other hand, was a minor act of treason, punishable by imprisonment. So, also, new French signs were barred. As a sign or poster wore out it must be replaced in German; nor could a French sign be repaired. But the shopkeepers used to repair their signs, very gradually so as to escape attention, in the dead of night.

"There's one, for example," said the mayor, "which lasted from 1870 to 1914!"

For forty-four years the Alsations lived under German civil law. The problem of changing from one code to another, in the midst of this war, was too much for the French Government to tackle; so the German code is still enforced, under native judges. Most property value had been

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reckoned in terms of the mark, which remains the standard of value in legal transactions. All that, of course, will change with the end of the war, when France and Alsace have more leisure. French always at heart, the younger Alsatians have perforce grown up Gremans by custom; and the transition takes time.

We had reached the public square now; and it was time to go. I hurried over to get my baggage and make my adieus. The military band was giving a concert beside the open-air theater, and the populace—mainly women and children—was promenading under the trees.

As I came back to the square I was aware that a kind of hush had descended on the babble of the crowd, that I heard the band more and more distinctly, and human voices not at all. Near me a knot in a doorway was looking at the sky. I followed their gaze. Three aëroplanes, flying rather low—big, black, sinister! One in the group had been using a pair of field glasses. He lowered them.

“Yes—the black cross—*Boche!*” he said quietly. Then the guns began to go on the outskirts of the town; smoke puffs broke about these sinister giant wasps. I crossed the square; it was as bare as a bone; the crowd had melted away like magic; the people showed themselves only in knots about the open doors. The band, never losing a note, was playing on, as merrily as ever. A courier ran over and ordered them into a substan-



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tial building near by. With decent deliberation they strolled to shelter. Only officers stood on the square now; they were looking up through their glasses, commenting upon the marksmanship of the "archies."

It was an air raid—or at least so every one felt. These were heavy, bomb-carrying machines; and three machines of that capacity and at that height could play the dickens with the town. They were circling as though to get position above us; and my mind jumped ten minutes ahead. The place was packed with children—those well-behaved little boys whose heads I had seen bobbing in the transept at church, those pretty little girls in the national costume. Ten minutes more and we should be digging in ruins for poor, broken little bodies.

The planes circled on, nearer and nearer. More guns were going, and still more; the clouds broke faster about the planes. I saw the tail of one of them lift, saw it shiver and seem to stagger, with a shell that burst just under its rudder. The shrapnel would be overhead in a minute more; even some of the officers were finding places near doorways, ready to get cover when the real danger began. Then from a group still standing and observing under a tree I heard some one cry:

"They are turning—toward Belfort!"

I looked. In fact, they had turned. An instant later they were speeding away. The band emerged, the drummer remarking to me as he took

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his place that no Fourteenth of July was complete without fireworks. On the first strain of the music the populace broke from alleys and doorways like runners from the mark. From one entrance came ten boys carrying a piano for the out-of-doors theater. The excitement had caught them halfway down a street, but they had taken pains to get the piano under cover! When, five minutes later, we waved good-by to that dear, troubled and merry little town the celebration was proceeding as noisily as ever.

Why the Germans withdrew without shooting remains a mystery to me; and it seemed to puzzle the officers. Perhaps our anti-aircraft protection was better than they expected. Perhaps they had sighted French scouting machines. And perhaps, being on some other mission, they merely stopped to look us over. But at any rate we had all the thrills of an air raid without its tragedies.

We spun across the same fair prospect of mountain and valley; and on the road our car picked up a staff captain going our way. He had been fatally wounded three times, he told us, laughing. His left hand was totally paralyzed. He got all this in the line, principally at Verdun. Transferred to the staff, he was spending his leisure in composing a play for the Théâtre Français. It turned out that we were in the presence of a French poet, one of the names among the younger generation of writers.

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Now the villages began to show torn walls and gaping window frames; but even from these battered relics of war the tricolor floated. Finally we reached the larger town, which was our destination. Much as I have seen of ruins between Dunkirk and Monfalcone—and ruins seem to me now the normal aspect of war, so that I seldom turn to look at them—this town presented a new aspect. It had its heaviest shelling early in the war. Every building, I judge, must have been hit in one fashion or another. For a time the inhabitants went away; when the shelling grew less frequent the hardier among them came back, cleaned out their cellars as shelters in time of trouble, and resumed a semblance of normal life. Now those older ruins present the same curious effects of domesticity suddenly exposed to the world's view that one sees in every bombarded village. Stationary washstands occupy the edges of gaping floors, chandeliers hang from ceilings peppered like sieves.

But Nature, unhampered, had been at work as usual for three summers; so grass and flowers were growing through the cracks of second-story floors. I saw even a bunch of harebells clustered about a kitchen sink! This town is nearer the German line than troubled old Rheims. Its outskirts are even within range of German machine-gun fire. But along the streets—every intact building provided with a sign telling how many persons its cellar would hold—veterans of 1870



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still sprang to salute, and village women, in their best Sunday black with parasols and lace mitts, waved at us. When we drew up at a certain hotel, much battered by bombardment but patched up for all practical purposes, a crowd of civilian men in black clothes and officers in uniform waited outside the door. For the dignitaries from all this part of recovered Alsace were about to hold a banquet to honor the birthday of the Republic—and deliverance.

I never sat down to a stranger meal—or to a merrier. The large hall where the tables were ranged looked very, very battered and run to seed. There were even dents in the walls where projectiles which had broken windows had taken toll of the plaster. A new bust of the Republic, such as stands in every *mairie* of France, had been brought up for the occasion; wrapped in the tricolor it stood above the toastmaster's seat. There was also a bank of potted palms and growing flowers, assembled from undestroyed houses all over town. Above everything hung a great tricolor on a staff; and that, they told me, was a story in itself. Made in 1848, the municipal flag of the town, it had lain under the planks of a floor, between 1870 and 1914. Another tricolor, draped over a door, had rested during all the long, dark time in the upholstery of a chair.

We were scarcely seated before we rose in a body to give roaring welcome to a general and his staff. We sang, with all the power in our voices,

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The Marseillaise, that song of hope which had been chanted in whispers and behind closed doors for forty-four years. A little boy and girl, hand in hand, spoke a "piece" of welcome. And we proceeded to a very good luncheon.

I am not a collector of bills of fare; but the one that stood beside my plate at the banquet I shall keep for a historic relic. "Long live French Alsace!" reads the heading, translated. "National Fête—Alsatian Revenge—First Banquet given at Blank, under German Fire, July 14, 1917."

The menu had the usual complimentary names for the dishes, as *potage des Allies, garniture Lorraine*. However, in trying to compliment the United States, Alsace slipped on American slang. *Homard à la Pershing*, reads the second item in the menu. Now a *homard* is a lobster!

A moment after we seated ourselves the phrase "under German fire" became a reality instead of a decorative boast. For firing broke out—heavy cannon fire. My neighbors listened just an instant, their soup spoons poised, and then went on with their joking conversation. I supposed it was merely some regular and perfunctory shelling by our own batteries, and I was perhaps the only man at the banquet who did not understand that these were anti-aircraft guns, and that the German planes were over us.

My neighbors were officers and old civilian dignitaries of the region, massive men with broad, forceful faces. The officers were mostly Alsatian

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either by birth or blood. One, who had been born in Alsace and lived there through the dark time, managed to escape on the eve of the war and to join the French forces. Another had left for Paris at the age of fifteen, and never returned until he came with the army that recovered this bit of his native province. Children born in Alsace, it appears, were not allowed by the Germans to leave until they were fourteen; the conquerors seemed to think that early training in German schools would make the Alsatians Germans.

There were many stories as the wine went round. In this district, the civilians told me, conversation in the French language, though it tended to make one *persona non grata* with the authorities, was not forbidden, but it was illegal to teach the language or to publish documents or placards in French. Nevertheless, when the French schoolmasters, following the army, began instruction in the autumn of 1914, they found that most of the children were speaking perfectly good French. In 1913 those same children, if addressed by a stranger in French, would have turned on him a blank stare, so well had they been informed of the danger of what they were doing.

They spoke, too, of the social cut which the older Alsatian families enforced against the conqueror. "I was born and educated at Strasburg," said an army surgeon. "I have dissected



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a cadaver for weeks at a time with a German student, and never addressed a word to him.”

Then one of the civilians told this story, which he got from his father: In the church of a village near by stands a statue of the Virgin holding a silver mouse in the right hand. At some period of the Middle Ages, so the legend runs, this town was troubled with a plague of mice. The people prayed to the Virgin and were delivered of the mice. So this little silver mouse was given as a votive offering. When, after 1870, the Germans took possession, the mayor was forced to show the new Prussian commandant the points of interest. “What’s that for?” grunted the German when he saw the silver mouse. The mayor told him the legend. “And,” he added, “we hope soon to put in the other hand a little golden Prussian helmet!”

There were speeches, of course—the general, the mayor, the representatives of the other towns. Finally they toasted the United States, and Henri Bazin, correspondent of the Philadelphia *Evening Ledger*, the only one among us who handled French with native fluency, responded so well that the assembled guests carried him away from the table on their shoulders.

There was much ranging that afternoon and next day through other villages, all hung with flags, all splashed with the red of native costume. There was much talk of the Alsatian problem from the persons most concerned; but everything was

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an anticlimax after this singular and stirring banquet. Finally, and just before we left the district, we stood on a dominating height on a clear morning to view the panorama of the Front. To the right rose the mountains of Switzerland. Among the rounded peaks to the left was one where the trees stood stripped naked or broken; it was Hartmansweillerkopf, scene of fighting hardly less intense and heroic than that before Verdun. And between these extremities, now hidden by a peak, now running a long course in a valley, lay a yellow thread through the blue landscape—the line.

The Alsace-Lorraine question is tremendously complicated. There are the historic argument, the linguistic argument, the economic argument, and finally the human argument. The Germans, pedants gone mad, seem to be running heavily to the historic argument, the very line of reasoning that should have least weight of all, since we are living now not in the past but in a terrible present and a very uncertain and significant future. It was theirs once, they say; in 1870 they merely took it back. Though I have ruled that argument out of court, let me examine it, for it reveals the mental processes of that peculiar people whom we used to esteem logical.

Alsace-Lorraine was never, before 1870, a part of Germany, because there was no real Germany before the nineteenth century. Until that time

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the region that is now the German Empire was a collection of princedoms and duchies, shifting their territories with each little war. Not all of these states even spoke the German language; not all of them held a population prevailingly Teutonic in blood. Alsace, which kept on the whole fairly independent, was at times an appanage of a duchy which is now a part of Germany; but so once were Burgundy and the Franche-Comté—now a loyal, integral part of Eastern France—and even Marseilles. The historic claim of Germany to Burgundy is actually as good as that to Alsace. Finally, under Louis XIV, Alsace became a part of France. It was a matter of conquest; that was before Continental states dreamed of granting peoples the right to choose their rulers. But this process, extending over several years, began with the cession of all Alsace except Strasburg in 1648—only twenty-eight years after the landing of the Pilgrims. That, in the American memory, is a long time. It would be a long time in the German memory, too, were it not for the blatant pan-Germanist follies of such historians as Treitschke. In the century and a half which preceded the Revolution, Alsace had already become a loyal and contented part of France. And the Revolution fused her forever with the Republic. The Marseillaise was composed, and first sung, at Strasburg. The Alsatians fought mightily to hold the new Republic against its external enemies, conspicuously Prussia. Later Napoleon drew more generals and



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marshals from Alsace than from any other district of similar population.

The linguistic argument is more moonshine. The common people of Alsace speak among themselves a dialect without a literature, akin to German. But the people of Brittany speak Breton; so they should be joined to Wales! And the people of the French Pyrenees speak Basque; since there are more Basques in Spain than in France, the Pyrenees should all belong to the Spanish!

The economic argument is simply this: Lorraine has valuable iron mines and Alsace rich phosphates; Germany needs them in her business. So do I need a hundred million dollars from John D. Rockefeller!

The human argument is the only one which now has weight in the court of civilized nations. Here is Alsace-Lorraine with one million five hundred thousand inhabitants of the old, loyal French stock, and four hundred thousand Germans transplanted since 1870. Leave these lands with Germany, even a Germany slightly democratized, and there is the same old unhappy problem which has lasted for forty-four years—a people living under a shadow, their real national life suppressed. Give them to France, and even that minority of Germans—should they remain—would be absorbed in the course of time into French nationality.

For democracies, and especially such liberal, tolerant democracies as France, are absorptive.

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We ourselves furnish the best exemplar. Autocracies are not.

Democracy does not try to force the stranger into its ways except as this is necessary for the orderly working of law. Autocracies are arbitrary in this matter. So, by the contrariness of human nature, the newcomer allies himself more easily and readily with a people which does not demand such alliance. Still further, France has the quality of attracting aliens; as many have pointed out before, she is the only nation in this war with a foreign legion. Germans can rule only Germans; they are ridiculously incapable of ruling other peoples. Only one thorough solution is possible to the question of Alsace-Lorraine: The restoration of these provinces to the France of their love and loyalty.

## CHAPTER XI

### SWITZERLAND THE UNEASY

BERN, August 3rd.

LUCK has been with me at borders this trip. This barrier between France and Switzerland—the only line of communication for through trains—is so dreaded of travelers in wartime that reports of its doings make wonder tales for the café gossips of Paris. No matter how good your papers, how strong your recommendations, the story goes, you are liable to a detention of one to three days and to a most thorough search.

However, we were no sooner settled in our compartment of the through night train than F——, of the Red Cross, looked in. Engaged from the beginning of the war in Polish relief, with headquarters in Switzerland, he has crossed this border again and again, knows all the officials, and has established himself as a thoroughly reliable person. Learning that I was crossing this particular border for the first time since the war, he offered his services to help me through.

Early in the morning we were rapped out by the porter, and deposited with our bags and belongings on the scant platform of a little hill station which in that direction marks the end of



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France. It was a full train; all trains on this line run full in August, when the weary and ailing are scheming to escape from the somewhat anæmic summer airs of Paris to the ozone of the Swiss mountains. I had engaged my sleeper passage a fortnight ahead, and I had applied none too soon. By the time the station porter had transported us across the platform into the station building, I found myself at the end of an amorphous crowd about two hundred feet long. At the head of the line was a door in a temporary wooden partition, guarded by two armed French soldiers. Craning my neck to look over the heads of the crowd, I could see the leaders pass through the door; a long and weary time would intervene before the soldiers motioned the next passenger from the line.

To my left was a wide space, railed in with low tables, on which stood arranged our baggage. As passenger number two, with an anxious expression of the back, passed through the little door, I would see passenger number one cross the open space and disappear, properly escorted, through another door in another partition. So we crept on, a ragged line composed of all nationalities—save, I trust, those of the Central Powers—all social conditions, all ages. A step forward became an event. Marking my progress by a signboard in three languages, which warned us against carrying gold out of France, I calculated that it would be a matter of hours.

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In the meantime I could see my friend of the Red Cross talking to an officer and two men in civilian clothes over by the mysterious second door. A keen-faced, dapper little Frenchman detached himself from the group, made his way to me through the queue and led my wife and me to the first door ahead of the crowd. There, without any examination, our passports with their visés were inspected and given a preliminary stamp. I was led then to the second door, which I entered alone. I was in a little room of plain, undecorated pine board, furnished with a table and two chairs—nothing more. In the chair by the table sat a Frenchman with a keen countenance that showed not the slightest trace of expression.

Politely, but a little coldly, he asked me to sit down; then he questioned me on my business in Switzerland. I stumbled on a French word, whereupon he switched to good idiomatic English, which he learned, I think from his accent, in the United States. I was visiting the country, I told him, to write for my publication. Ah, yes, and on what topics? The general condition of the country because of the war, the Swiss side of the importation question, and whatever I could learn there of the meaning in the German cabinet upheaval, I replied.

We conversed in general terms on the knotty question of German politics before, toying with my passport, he remarked that I had been in Spain. A neutral visé on a passport is rightly a

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matter of suspicion in these days. I had, I replied—and for the same purpose that brought me to Switzerland. Had I been to the French Front? Oh, yes, many times, as these papers showed. And how did I find things in Spain? I discoursed for a few minutes on the position of the King and Romanones, on Lerroux's attitude toward the Revolution, on the German propaganda. Suddenly he seemed satisfied; for he folded up my passport and bowed me out with best wishes for the success of my mission to Switzerland.

All this time I had a curious feeling of being in the death house at Sing Sing or in some other place pregnant with tragic fate. For here, I take it, the suspects are sifted from the unsuspected; and through that door, I have not the slightest doubt, men have gone since this war to the drum-head court-martial and firing squad, and women to solitary cells. Sure as I was of my own case, I found myself drawing a deep breath of relief as I crossed the threshold. A soldier put the final stamp on my passport, the dapper little man saw that my luggage was passed, upon my word of honor that it contained no written communications save letters of introduction and credentials, and we were free to rush to the station restaurant for breakfast.

Treasonably I will now set down one fact to the credit of the enemy of the world: The Germans know how to make coffee as the Americans know coffee; the Latins don't. The Swiss have caught the trick from their dangerous neighbors. It



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seemed to me that I was tasting coffee for the first time in four months.

As I sent the waitress for a second cup I asked my Red Cross friend how he did it.

“Told the truth, that’s all,” he said. “I said that you represented the most widely circulated periodical in the English language, that you’d been the friend of the Entente long before we got into the war, and that it would be an act of courtesy. I’d like to see any one put over any bunk with those fellows!”

After two hours a somewhat reduced company of travelers were ranged on the station platform; we got our baggage aboard, and were off. Without the aid of signboards and frontier posts I should have known, in the next ten miles of running, that we had passed from a war country to a peace country. The fields looked better tended. Men—young, lusty men—were tilling them, not exclusively women, old men and boys. Soldiers there were on every platform, for sturdy little Switzerland is mobilized against all contingencies; but they were neat, peacetime soldiers. Their neutral-gray Norfolk jackets, their long trousers curiously buttoned about their boot tops, their double-peaked caps looked bright and new. Against them I found myself setting the streaked faded uniforms, the dented helmets, the worn brown kits of the *poilus* going home on leave, whom I had seen at the station in Paris only the night before.

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There was a contrast, too, in the faces. These were just young men, ordinary, though somewhat exceptionally sturdy, young men. Those others, there in Paris, had in their sun-baked, wind-streaked faces that look of gravity, of experience, of resolution, which war brings and which they will carry to their graves.

We changed cars at Geneva, and there was an hour's wait, during which we walked down to look at the lake. Here was contrast again—a contrast so subtle that I cannot convey it on paper. The attitudes of the people as they walked, their expressions as they talked, the rhythm of their voices when they laughed were all different—more natural it seemed to me at the moment. The appearance of the city brought another shock. I do not know whether Geneva is considered neater and cleaner than any other European city. I realized how dingy Paris had become externally—that city which has been too busy these three years in saving civilization, for the pretty graces of external cleanliness. What Paris needs, I realize now, are paint, whitewash, gilding and new glass. Scarcely a brushful of paint, I take it, has been applied to any Parisian exterior for three years. When this war is over not only Paris but all France must have an unprecedented spree of painting.

We had been duly warned in Paris that we would not enter Switzerland without being watched by the enemy, and that efforts of the most

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subtle kind would be made to extract information. And on the run from Geneva to Bern the signs began to appear. Two men entered our compartment. One of them, it was noted, had a sword slash across one cheek. Never speaking to each other, and paying no attention to us, they settled down to read newspapers. We talked away—on general topics, such as the scenery and French literature. In the corridor which runs the length of the compartments a sharp-faced person, whose clothes and bearing gave no hint as to his nationality, loafed, ostentatiously viewing the scenery—of which there was a plenty—all during the run to Bern. We caught him watching us with a surreptitious eye when he thought we were not looking.

Searching luggage in hotels is, we are informed, a favorite trick of the German agent in these parts. The hotel at which I find myself registered to-night is headquarters for several of the Entente legations. It is doubtless safe from that process. However, I am going deeper in Switzerland later and shall stay at other hotels; so, plagiarizing Mark Twain, I have written and placed in the portfolio where I keep my papers the following sample of cheap American wit:

### TO THE GERMAN AGENT:

I have arranged my papers for your convenience. Everything I have that could be of any possible interest to you, except my passport and my



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credentials from my journal, is in this portfolio. The passport is the usual American passport; that kind has been forged so many times that it would be of no use to you as a model.

My wife keeps on the table in her room three notebooks filled with literary notes of no international importance. She, too, carries her passport on her person. In her hand bag she keeps her credentials and a few other personal papers, like her marriage certificate. Usually she carries it, but sometimes she leaves it in the room. If you do not find it when you call, kindly call again.

If there is anything in these papers that you do not understand call upon me personally some day. I am sure that I should be interested in your conversation. All forms of life, high and low, interest me.

BERN, August 5th.

Resisting a temptation that will probably be constant for the next fortnight, to write about scenery, let me mention that this is the neatest, spick-and-spanest little city that ever decorated the earth. The guidebooks tell us that it has more relics of mediæval times than any other large city in Switzerland. One finds those statements hard to believe. The mediæval guild houses starred in the guidebooks look as though they had been built last year on some rather affected design, so well have they been repaired and kept up for three or four centuries. The city stands on both sides of a gorge bottomed by a rushing, beryl-colored river. On the lowlands along the river bank stand most of the older portions of the city. Crossing the

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high bridges one looks down on a fascinating tangle of overhanging, red-tiled, snubbed-off roofs.

Of course I have visited the bears of Bern. Every child knows about them. Concerning which I record only one curious fact in natural history, imparted to me to-day by a member of the Federal Council, wherefore I take it to be authentic. These bears—at present three old ones and two cubs—are kept in a pit by the gorge-bank at the expense of the municipality and the public, as a symbol of the town—Bern meaning bear.

The city furnishes the quarters, and the public most of the food. The keeper, at the edge of the pit, sells you a bunch of carrots for seven cents or a bag of cakes for ten cents. You proceed to the edge of the pit and make the bears do tricks for their provender.

The female bear, mother of the cubs in the other part of the pit, sits on her hind legs when she sees you hold up a carrot and puts her paws together in an attitude of prayer. Being further teased, she rolls over onto her back and spreads all her four paws apart, the great flat soles toward you. The big male bear begins his performances by sitting up with his paws crossed primly. If you do not throw him a carrot he rises erect on his hind legs and jiggles up and down like a man about to leap from a springboard. That failing, he whirls himself round with a dance step once or twice, and then puts his forepaws against the edge of the pit

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and looks up with an expression which says: "That's all. Come through with the carrot!" The specialty of the third bear is sticking out his tongue as he rolls on his back.

Now it appears that no one taught them these tricks. Generations and generations ago the bears of Bern learned that such little ways brought home the money. Succeeding generations of eleemosynary Bern bears learned them from their elders. The two half-grown cubs—usually kept apart from the others because their mother, a low, despicable character, has moods when she wants to eat them—have progressed with their education as far as sitting up on their hind legs.

Bern is flowing chockful these days. I hear that it is the only city in Switzerland where the hotels are not closed or failing. Its population, in fact, has increased by nearly ten thousand since the war; for it is the capital of the one neutral country that furnishes the direct link between the belligerents; and the new diplomatic activities, legitimate and illegitimate, open and secret, are without number. The German embassy, for example, has seven hundred attachés, besides others who may or may not be attached; these, together with their families, transported by Imperial favor into a land where one can get something to eat, make up a good part of the new population.

With such an increase in population houses are hard to get. One of our attachés, for instance,



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has been trying in vain for six months. The overflow has taken to the hotels and most conspicuously to this excellent Swiss hotel at which I am staying. Here also lives the general in command of the Swiss Army—Switzerland appoints a general only in times of national peril such as this—so before the main entrance stands always a sentry. At three this morning I was wakened by tramping and sharp words of command outside—the sentinels were being changed.

Here dwell citizens and diplomats of all the Powers on both sides of the war, in peace if not in harmony. At the height of the season, which is now past for Bern, one of the hotel employees, who keeps track of such things, counted twenty-three nationalities in the dining room and the lobbies.

We dined last night with a tableful of our attachés and their wives. We sat at the “Allied end” of the big dining room. Next to us were the British; far away at the other end were the German table—frequented by gentlemen with mustaches modeled on the Kaiser’s—and the Austrian table. It has been remarked here that the German table and the Austrian table have little commerce with each other, and also that the Austrians seem to have the better time.

Try as you will, you cannot help rubbing elbows with the enemy. We have a reading room, carrying the Berlin newspapers and periodicals, as well as those of London. Last night I beheld, in chairs

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almost adjacent, a lean, well-tubbed Englishman reading the *Times* with the aid of a monocle, and a portly German, with a mustache which aspired to a place in the sun, reading the *Tageblatt* through another monocle. If you enter into a conversation in the lobbies with a friend, some person of doubtful nationality is almost sure to take a seat behind you and absorb himself ostentatiously in a newspaper.

To the English contingent here the Germans are as things that have no existence. The Germans are not quite so well controlled. I noticed on the first evening an elderly gentleman with a handsome, artistic hawk face, accompanied wherever he went by two ladies of ample proportions. I was told next day that he was a well-known Viennese comedian, who has obtained from his government the favor of taking his vacation in a land where there is something to eat.

Last night my wife found herself in the elevator with this trio. They stared at her hard. As she approached her floor she said "*Deuxième*"—second.

"Ho!" said the comedian in French. "French!" I am told that all the scorn an actor knows was in his tone. "Ho-ho-ho!" roared the ladies. "French!" and their laughter followed her down the hall.

I got mine this evening after dinner. From the first I had marked floating in and out from the German table a rather handsome woman, but am-

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ply proportioned. She wore a wasp-waist corset of the 1885 period and a pair of enormous diamond earrings—and of course other clothes. Whenever I passed her she looked me over from feet to head, even turning all the way round to continue the inspection. This evening I passed her on the way to the reading room. She was talking with a German man. “Ho! American!” she said very distinctly in French. “Ho-ho-ho! American!” said he. They have a nimble wit.

The top floor of this hotel, I believe, has rather thin partitions. One of the English contingent tells me that he found himself for a time in the next room to a German. Every morning, and nearly every evening, he heard something which excited his curiosity. There would be a splashing and a sound of running water. Then a booming German voice would say distinctly several times “*Gott strafe England!*” The Briton, rather suspecting that this might be done for his benefit, finally consulted the valet on his floor. “What’s it all about?” he asked.

“Well, you see, sir,” replied the valet, “he has promised to say those words twice a day, and he is afraid he may forget, so he has engaged himself to do it while he is brushing his teeth. That helps him remember, sir!”

We had a big addition to the American contingent yesterday—a party of consuls and commercial men from Turkey, that original kingdom having just got round to cleaning out our diplomatic



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representatives. Most of them had been in Turkey ever since the war; this afternoon I found a group playing billiards in the American bar of the hotel. "The first billiard table I have seen for years!" said one of the consuls. Also, they are eating immoderately, and admit it. "I have a lot of lost dinners to make up," said one of the commercial men. Whatever they told me of Turkey in this war is not, for one reason or another, to be published. But they were in such a holiday humor as temporarily to make glad the corridors of this hotel, where the atmosphere of suspicion and suppressed hatred keeps things always a little somber.

At any time of the day one sees the uniforms of both sides on the streets, for there are thousands of French, British, Germans and Belgians interned in Switzerland; and according to the rules of the game they must wear their uniforms, in order to make the breaking of parole harder. My first sight of a German Fritz clumping down the streets in his neutral-green uniform and his stout military boots gave me a kind of shock of surprise. It is three years now, lacking a month, since—in Belgium—I last beheld a free man in a German uniform. To-day I saw dozens of men in French uniform pass other dozens in German uniform. Each party to these meetings would look straight ahead, pretending that he had not noticed.

For the benefit of the Entente peoples the shops are displaying such signs as these: "Swiss manu-

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facture." "Same composition as —, the German preparation, but of strictly Swiss origin." "This line made of Swiss and English material." Knowingly to buy German goods is the one cardinal sin among the French, American and English colonies here.

BERN, August 8th.

My cup runneth over with information, and probably also with misinformation. This city—what with its thousands of diplomats, of agents open and secret, of propagandists, of peace agents, of charity workers—is the one place in all this world to gain a proportionate view of the war—provided you are content to wait long enough to sift out the true from the false.

An American does not stay here very long before he is approached with more or less sincerity by people who represent the other side of the war. Long ago they gave up all pressure of that kind on the French and the British; but we are new to the war, and they still have hopes, as I read the signs, of breaking down our sympathy with the Entente Allies. They do not come to one as people seeking information; they carefully refrain from trying to pump out facts. What they are trying is to implant certain ideas. Collating their remarks, I see that they harp always on two main lines.

The first is to drive a wedge between us and the British. They dwell on that point. If en-

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couraged to talk on the subject most of them lose their tempers and fly off into loud absurdities. Twice in the past two days I have been told that for twenty years England, scheming England, maintained a press bureau, and that every impression of Germany published in America came through that bureau. All of which sounds humorous in the ears of a correspondent who went to jail more than once in the early days of the war because he grew too enterprising in his efforts to prove England's case.

Rage rises to its climax when you question the meaning of that hollowest phrase in history, "Freedom of the seas."

"But aren't the seas free?" you ask mildly.

"Not while one side can blockade the other's ports in time of war!" is the answer from a man who has just told you that if peace comes now there will never be another war.

The other point, on which they hammer persistently and with better temper, should be rather more interesting to us. Remembering that we are fighting for democracy and for nothing else, they try to make one believe that the battle of democracy is won—that a democratized Germany is waiting with outstretched arms to inaugurate the brotherhood of man. One of them—I believe him a sincere man too—was in Germany during the upheaval that shot Bethmann-Hollweg out of office. He gave a very coherent and interesting account of events in that crisis. It went to prove



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that the Socialists, the Centrists and the Progressives had combined on the peace program of no annexations and no indemnities, that they had secured a majority of the Reichstag, and that they had pledged Michaelis, before he took office, to support their views. According to him the democratization of Germany was complete.

I half believed him—there is no question in my mind that he believed himself—until the next day, when I quoted his views to several well-informed, able and coldly neutral Swiss. They laughed. "Bethmann-Hollweg went out because he wabbed," they said in effect; "Michaelis went in because he would be sure to take program and because he would probably be more firm. A few sops were thrown to the people, but the old crowd is still in control."

Let me absolve myself from any charge of holding intellectual commerce with the enemy. Some of these men pretend at least to be neutrals. Some of them are actually citizens by birth of the Entente nations. There is a kind of mind which the German machinery of life fascinates. Some ten or a dozen American correspondents, of whom I was one, witnessed the first German drive through Belgium. Most of us were so appalled and horrified by what we saw as to become anti-German for life. But one man was so overcome with admiration that he threw up his position as London correspondent, to follow their armies and

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to further their cause by every means in his power. It is a matter of temperament, I suppose.

BERN, August 9th.

Though this has nothing to do with the war let me mention that Switzerland seems to me to do excellently well with her system of public ownership of public utilities. The tramway system in this city of one hundred thousand inhabitants is smooth-running, convenient, comfortable. The fares are either two or three cents. A few years ago, when municipal ownership was much discussed, I remember that its antagonists had much to say about the inefficiency of the Swiss telephone system. From an experience of a week with the Bern telephones I should say that the service is as good as we used to get in San Francisco—which has always seemed to me the perfect standard. Yesterday I had a long talk with one of our representatives here. In the course of our conversation he called up Basel, some two hours away by train, and Zurich, four hours away. I never saw a long-distance connection made more promptly in the United States. "That's a great comfort about working in Switzerland," he said. "You can telephone so conveniently to any part of the country." Local calls in Bern cost three cents.

I have been trying to run down the report current in the Allied Nations, that Germany at the beginning of the war hesitated whether to invade France through Belgium or Switzerland, and de-

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cided on Belgium because of the excellence of the Swiss Army. That is after all a futile quest. If the story is true its confirmation will come only years hence, when state papers become available and people begin to publish their reminiscences. However, every Swiss has heard it, and most believe it. This I find is the popular form of the story as told in the cottages and wayside inns: "Three years before the war the Kaiser visited Switzerland and watched the target practice of the Swiss Army, which is the best in the world. He saw one recruit make a perfect score—ten bull's-eyes out of ten tries at three hundred yards.

" 'Excellent shooting,' said the Kaiser.

" 'Yes,' said the recruit, 'and we have three hundred men who shoot as well as I do.'

" 'In that case,' said the Kaiser, 'we will go through Belgium!'



## CHAPTER XII

### AFTER THREE YEARS

SCHEIDIGG, BERNESE OBERLAND, August 11th.

MÜRREN, where I was dropped yesterday from the terminus of a dizzy rack-and-pinion railway, stands at an elevation of some five thousand feet in a highly picturesque part of the Bernese Oberland, which is called the most picturesque part of the Swiss Alps. The town hangs airily on the edge of a gorge from which the downward view is like that from an aëroplane. Across the gorge, and seeming to rise in your very face, is the Monk's Hood—a great, black cliff-wall. Craning your neck, you can see above that a white slope, vanishing into the clouds. It is part of the Jungfrau—her majestic peak, which dominates the whole Bernese Oberland, is hidden by its very proximity. On the right is a high, white mountain wall; and everywhere above are glaciers. But stay! I came very near to writing about the scenery!

Mürren is now virtually the British center of Switzerland; for here England keeps her largest camp of exchanged and interned prisoners. Since Germany has shown that she recognizes no obli-

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gations of honor, prisoners cannot be exchanged on the old basis, whereby the exchanged man goes home on parole not to re-enter the war. However, the Swiss Red Cross arranged early in the war for the exchange of a limited number on the basis of internment. Switzerland, afraid of crowding in these times of scanty food, agreed to provide for thirty thousand. A commission of neutral physicians visited the prisons in France, Germany and England to decide what prisoners, considering their physical condition, had the greatest need of release. Most of the men who drew this melancholy luck were suffering from the mutilation of old wounds; others had broken down in captivity. Among those transferred from Germany, an undue number had tuberculosis, the result of under-nourishment. Other things being equal, the men who had been longest in captivity were chosen for release; so among the interned men here are soldiers of the old army—"General French's Contemptibles,"—who saw only a day or two of this war, for they were captured in the retreat from Mons.

Now I must go back for a space of nearly three years. Two days after the battle of Mons, and in a brief space between military arrest and military arrest, I, together with Gerald Morgan, was bluffing my way from Brussels to Mons on an order to pass German lines which, we knew very well, was no good in the zone of operations. In a half-destroyed village between Braine-le-Comte and

## A REPORTER AT ARMAGEDDON

Mons, we walked suddenly into a picture which I shall remember as long as I have memory.

Round a corner came a procession of British soldiers, four abreast, marching like veterans but without arms. Before them, and strung out along their flanks, were German soldiers, looking stout and stubby beside the athletic lath-build of these Englishmen. A very tall sergeant was at the head of the procession. His blue eye lit on us; we must have shown by our features and our clothes, in that foreign land, that we were one of his race; for his expression said: "Who the devil are you?"

Others caught our eyes. One tall Highlander even turned round to regard us. Whereupon a little German guard, tagging along with his shorter steps, burst into a flood of impassioned language and kicked him. That started kicking all along the line. The cool British disdain of the prisoners was beautiful to see. They never turned their eyes to the kickers nor flinched from the kick. They simply marched on with uninterrupted step, their eyes straight ahead; but now and then one of them, speaking from the corner of his mouth as convicts do, expressed himself in forcible and vulgar Anglo-Saxon.

A wave of hot, primitive rage swept over me at seeing one of my own race and speech treated in a manner so brutally cowardly; for the first time, I felt the full call of the blood and knew where I must stand in this war. But what could I do?



## AFTER THREE YEARS

An idea came to me. I hoped soon to get out from behind the German lines and return to England; I could at least take their names home, that their people might know. I approached them, and just dodged a German bayonet. The sergeant in command spoke a little French—I have no German. He accepted the cigarette that I thrust at him as a peace offering, but when I asked for speech with the prisoners he fell into a wild rage and made a suggestive pass toward his belt. The other guards hurried us along. The Germans had torn off all their insignia as souvenirs, so that I could not even determine the regiments. The only mark of identification was the black-and-red checkerboard about the caps of the Highlanders, which, I learned later, proved them to be of the Gordons.

Later, and after several ticklish episodes wherein before showing our near-pass, we walked into weapons with our hands up, we came upon another convoy, resting. A line of Highlanders sat upon a village curb, their heads in their hands; they looked like men clean spent. Across the street, soldiers in the regular khaki lay stretched out on the sidewalks. Again we approached the authorities, after showing our pass, requesting speech with the prisoners; and again we got only the same violence of language and gesture. But as I passed the Highlanders, one looked at me with a cool, grey Scotch eye and inquired without moving his lips: "What are you doing here, Jock?"

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And I answered in the same fashion: "Luck to you, Wullie!"

Three or four days later, locked up in a troop train going back to Germany, I spent five or six hours in the station of Louvain, while the Germans, with a kind of methodical rage, were performing their historic atrocity. Our car stood before the arch of the station looking out on to the plaza; we saw it all, including the preliminaries to the shooting of three priests. That glimpse of Hell, which I shall not stop here to describe, took my nerve for some time; I was months getting it out of my dreams. But among the details that I marked was a band of some seventy or eighty British prisoners whom I recognized as part of the convoy I had seen near Mons. Round them the Germans were moving in a kind of super-normal state of blood-drunkenness. They were in shadow; but as a new building flamed up with the bright, vivid explosion of the patent German house-destroyer, they came out in clear light. They lay sprawled on the platform or sat braced against the station wall in the attitude of men too much beaten by weariness and circumstance for any emotion. They were the last thing I craned my neck to see as we pulled out from the Hell of burning Louvain to the Purgatory of broken Liége.

I expected to meet some of these men again at Mürren; this was half of my motive in going there. But I never hoped for such luck as came my way.

## AFTER THREE YEARS

When, yesterday afternoon, I mentioned the matter to the pleasant, elderly lieutenant-colonel who commands the camp, he said easily that he had a few Mons men; if I wished, he'd make his sergeant gather them up on the terrace at seven o'clock. On the hour, I came out with a caseful of cigarettes to assist conversation. I took one look and sent back in a hurry for three boxes more. Sixty men were waiting for me—all Mons survivors, all taken, wounded or whole, in those first two terrible days when weight of numbers forced the British back.

We talked for an all-too-short hour. I did not get, as I had hoped, any consecutive account of their adventures; too many were breaking in with testimony. The men I had seen near Braine-le Comte, it seemed, were only half of the prisoners taken by the British at Mons. The rest were put on a train near Charleroi; but these strangely met acquaintances of mine were marched for three days, from Mons to the Cavalry barracks at Louvain. For two days they had by way of refreshment only one cup of coffee apiece. They were scarcely established when the Louvain affair broke out; the first sound of firing made them believe that the Allies had come to rescue them. And that night when I saw them on the station platform—it was the second night of the Louvain affair—they were hustled out of the barracks, halted for several hours in the station, and loaded finally on the back-going troop train that followed mine.



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The rest is a series of flashes, all the more impressive and convincing sometimes because the man who spoke was struggling with a small vocabulary for expression: "Kicked us! Yes, sir, an' worse. Thing I hated most was those bull whips the artillery uses. They was always curlin' round my legs." "The uhlands would take cracks at us with the butts of their lances. I got one in the small of the back, sir, and it fair bowled me over. I was lame for a week."

"When you stopped at Louvain, did you see the old man and the boy that we had with us? The boy wasn't more than fourteen. They were handcuffed together and in a dreadful state, sir—both crying. The Germans said they were going to be shot. The 'Uns was digging a grave out by the monument—I don't know whether it was for them or not. They was shot too—we 'eard the volley." "Worst thing I saw was the people passing through the square that night. Could you see it, sir? Orders had been given that all the people had to walk with their hands up. Little babies just old enough to walk—ought rightly to have been in a perambulator—with their hands up like the rest; the 'Uns made 'em."

Many times since the war I have heard that when the first British prison trains passed through Cologne the prisoners were moved out to the station platform, where the populace, men and women alike, were given the prized privilege of spitting on them. Some of the soldiers testi-

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fied to this event: "Spit and worse!" they said.

Without being snobbish, let me say that an officer's testimony to such facts as these is better than a private's, simply because the officer can be held responsible for his statement, and he better understands the consequences of stretching the truth. And in the course of the day I had much testimony to the same effect from officers. One of them, taken a few days after the retreat from Mons began, was four days going back to Germany by train. This was in the dog days of a very hot summer, and all the way back they were given water only once. Water there was, running from the taps at every station they passed, but when, their pride broken down, they begged for it, they got only laughs. Finally they asked a woman who stood on a station platform carrying a pail of water. She spat at them and hurled the water in their faces. Another, who had not eaten for three days when this incident happened, saw a woman in a Red Cross uniform serving hot coffee to the German soldiers on a station platform. The soldiers drank their fill and went back to their train; there was still coffee in her pail. He leaned out and asked in German for coffee, explaining how hungry he was. Laughing in his face, this credit to the Red Cross poured the rest of her coffee out on the planks of the platform.

Another told me this incident: In their train was a heavily wounded Englishman, raving for water in the thirst of fever. Finally, at a station,

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they attracted the attention of a woman in a nurse's uniform and told her about this man. She brought water and held it to his mouth. Then just as he thrust out his lips to drink she pulled the cup away, spilled the water on the floor, and departed, tooth-gnashing.

They also had their stories of spitting and worse on the Cologne platform and elsewhere. Such incidents as these, like the wanton and filthy defilement of French châteaux, have always seemed to me a worse indictment of the Germans than the actual atrocities. Massacre may have the excuse of battle heat and blood lust. These things indicate a highly educated spiritual rottenness.

All agreed that conditions in the German military prisons during the early part of the war were unspeakable, but that they had improved in the past year or so—except for the shortage of food. That shortage is the reason why many of these men have been granted transfer to Switzerland. They broke down or their wounds would not heal. One captain, taken as a wounded prisoner at Loos, in 1915, told me that he simply could not get medical aid until weeks later, when he landed in the base hospital. He knew that his wound was gathering pus and needed lancing. Though he sent a request five times he could not get a German surgeon to come near him. Finally a medical student among the Russian prisoners opened it with the razor from a field kit; by that time it had be-



## AFTER THREE YEARS

come an enormous, painful, purple lump. During the eleven months of his captivity the wound remained open because of his run-down condition. A few weeks after he reached Switzerland and good food it closed; and to-day he is playing tennis.

Shortage of food has been the main cause, probably, of tuberculosis, which affected some hundred and eighty men sent out of Germany last autumn and winter. These cases were sent to a separate camp far up in the Alps; and to date, forty have been returned to the regular camps as recovered. However, neither officers nor privates spoke much about prison life except in snatches such as this: I was standing with an officer admiring a beautiful specimen of the wolf-like German—or Alsatian—shepherd dog. “Wonderful animals!” he said; “I’m taking a pup home. Do you know, the Germans in the army teach them to bite a man at a word of command? In our camp the guards used to amuse themselves, when there was nothing else to do, by making them bite the prisoners.”

Life at Mürren is typically, even amusingly, English. The town itself has no reason for being except tourist trade; besides a few shops and a few more native wooden chalets, it consists solely of hotels and cottages. In the main hotel, whose terraces hang on the edge of the gorge, dwell many of the officers and the occasional visitors. Other officers have brought their wives over from England and rented cottages. The men fill

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the lesser hotels, where they live in such comfort as many of them have never known in their lives. A Y. M. C. A. building has been hastily constructed of wood; it has a small stage for amateur theatricals, an overworked billiard table and much reading matter. The officers are doing what they can to teach the mutilated men who will never be able to do hard work again the lighter trades, such as wood-working and printing; in this they are handicapped by lack of material and plant. The camp generally quarrels with the climate. In this place, five thousand feet high and surrounded by the glaciers, there are only three months of summer, and the winter is Arctic. However, the climate has much to do, I think, with certain miracles of recovery. Still, the British cherish a general hope that they will be moved into the valleys before next winter.

The officers and their families dress religiously for dinner; they entertain at tea; they have dances; they conduct themselves, in short, like Britons. There is a native Roman Catholic church for the Irish among the interned; and a Church of England extension society has established a temporary church for the Protestants.

With the men—and this is British again—sport gives the main interest to life. The only level spot in Mürren is a kind of plaza between the hotels, in old years covered with a series of tennis courts. Last autumn the officers, realizing that the men had no place for the universal British

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game of association football, gave up the tennis courts, and the ground was remade for a general athletic field. Cricket flourishes in the morning, as well as one-old-cat; the Canadians have not enough men for two full baseball teams, and they are disgusted to note that the English take no real interest in the Only Game. I saw yesterday the association-football match for the "cup tie," between the Regina and Palace teams—named after the hotels where the men live. At the end of the regular time the score was a draw—one to one; so an extra period was called, in which Palace made a goal and won.

With time out they had been playing nearly three hours; which is doing well for men who were declared physical incompetents a few months ago. As a matter of fact, the officers told me, some of those men should not have been playing, but it was nearly impossible to stop them. One of the Palace players, after a mix-up by his own goal, flopped over on the ground. "May be serious," muttered an officer anxiously. "He had a silver plate in the top of his head. If he was hit there —" but it turned out that he had been kicked in the wind, not the head; in five minutes he was back in the game, to the applause of the stands.

Once, late in the game, I marked a quaint group crossing a far corner of the field—a Swiss peasant boy, not more than three years old, and his little sister, not more than two. Between them they were wheeling a doll's perambulator. With their



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thick stubby shoes, with his little wool breeches, with her long, coarse cotton frock, and with both their stolid, serious little faces, they resembled a microscopic old man and woman. Just then the field changed kaleidoscopically, as soccer football fields do. The play came their way—surrounded them. They crouched over their perambulator while six gigantic Britons struggled round them to kick a flying ball—but did it so deftly as never to touch them. The ball dribbled down the field, and the goal keeper removed them from the shell zone.

I cannot finish without remarking on the dentist. Past military age but eager to do something, he thought on the condition of the prisoners' teeth, and he asked the War Office to send him as a volunteer helper to Mürren Camp. His services were accepted, but the War Office strained at providing the necessary apparatus and supplies. So he bought them himself. Ever since he has been working, with his wife as assistant, to put right every tooth in that camp. It was a big job, for your Briton of the working class is careless of his teeth. However, he has just about finished, after months of hard boring; and you would know these English Tommies from others of their class by their white tartarless smiles.

A pleasant life, as compared with that of the trenches or the prison camps; but still it is neither full liberty nor yet Blighty. And at this moment the place is quivering with a new excitement. The

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Swiss have arranged with all the governments concerned an agreement about repatriation of the disabled. In order to make room for more internments all men of all nations whose efficiency, on the strict Swiss insurance scale, has been reduced fifty per cent., will be repatriated—back to Blighty for good. This, it is believed, will cover about one-third of the cases. Every one now is thinking of home. Most of them, indeed, have already seen their families; for a British charity has been sending over wives for a fortnight's visit. But that was only a taste. Men who a month ago declared that they never felt better in their lives now mope about, talking of their undermined constitutions. The Swiss physicians, umpires of this queer game, finished their examination a week ago; and there is nothing to do now but wait.

Scheidigg, where I write this, stands at an elevation of nearly seven thousand feet and is one of the highest Alpine resorts. That would be considered no great height in our Rockies; but the Alps are different. They shoot up from bases not much higher than sea level; the eternal ice of their glaciers runs down as low as twenty-five hundred feet. Here we are far above the timber line; the earth grows only pasturage and abundant Alpine flowers. Just above us begin the snow and ice, culminating in the lacy peaks of the Jungfrau. Over everything to-night lies a wonderful Alpine stillness, broken only by the pleasant tinkling of cowbells—the Swiss dairyman, for what reason

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I do not know, puts a loud bell on every cow—and occasionally the rushing boom of an avalanche. But peace! No scenery!

This afternoon, wickedly running away from my job, I took the rack-and-pinion railroad to the Yoke of the Jungfrau at an elevation of eleven thousand feet. This, I believe, does not go so high as our Pike's Peak road, the European guide-books to the contrary notwithstanding; but the problem is not at all the same. The terrain over which this road must travel is mainly precipices; above Scheidigg the track enters a tunnel that runs the rest of the way just inside the surface of a three-thousand-foot cliff. This cliff is pierced here and there by windows, through which you see the world we know gradually fading away and the Arctic world beginning. The terminus is a primitive inn tunneled out from the rock. With its piazza as an outlook you can see on fair days the true peak of the Jungfrau rising some twenty-five hundred feet straight above.

Once the ascent of the Jungfrau was a two-day job for thorough experts only, and very dangerous at that. Now any person with a good head and a sound heart, provided with expert guides, can scale the peak from the Yoke in three to four hours up and two back. Except for the mist above, it was a fair day, and everywhere one could make out, against the snow, dots like small strings of black beads—roped parties of Swiss, now again alone with their own mountain fastnesses, climbing the



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peak or making the less giddy but equally dangerous trip across the glacier to the Concordia Hut. I was wild to go myself; I felt the peak calling me like a lover. But it was too late in the day; and unknown to himself the guide who showed me the way to the Matilda Peak and the View discouraged me from waiting overnight to make a start in the morning. Doubtless he did not know what was agitating my mind or he would have painted a different picture.

“It has been awful this season,” said Adolph, the guide, being interviewed; “it seems as if everything were against us. No one comes any more except Swiss people—and they don’t pay much. Once, sir, we had an American gentleman who hired six guides to take up his son and himself and doubled our pay for a *pourboire*. Nothing like that happens any more—no Americans, no Germans, and only an Englishman or two. Now comes August, which is the month for climbing the peak. The weather is usually good in August. We count on two climbing days out of three. How many good days do you suppose we have had this August? Two, sir—to-day and one day last week. Seems to me now that to-morrow will be bad too—that mist is going to settle down, and on foggy days it is too dangerous—we’re not allowed to go up with tourists.” The prospects of bad weather on the morrow chilled my intention of staying over for an ascent.

Adolph the guide did not converse in the lan-

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guage I have attributed to him. His speech was a mixture of English and French, with a German or Italian word thrown in here and there. He continued to gaze over the indescribable vista across the peaks to the Bern Valley, and his thoughts seemed to grow more pessimistic and discouraging. Three Eskimo dogs, used up here for winter emergencies but now turned out to play on their native element, loped over and sat down in a circle, watching us like wolves. Adolph packed a snowball and peevishly drove them away, while he continued to dwell on the rotten state of business. Many of the guides, he said, had quit and gone to farming for the duration of the war. He wished now he had done it himself. He could have got a job in a factory for the summer. "But that's hard after this," said Adolph. I agreed with him. He thought he could make it up in August, so many Swiss people were mountain climbing now—and then arrived this kind of weather.

Last summer everything would have gone bad except for the chamois. Because no tourists came to hunt them any more the chamois, since the war, had grown plentiful and bold. The open season is September. "Last September I shot ten, and got sixty francs apiece for them," said Adolph with pardonable pride. "But look now—in September of this year I am called to the colors for my month of military service!"

After all that, what could any man with the bowels of compassion do but double the fee?

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I have refrained, notice, from describing what Adolph and I were watching while he was interviewed; for I promised not to write about the scenery. I am rather glad I did. That vista of the range falling down to the Bern Valley on one side, that view of the glacier stretching into eternity on the other, transcend any powers of description that I possess.

This hotel had eight guests for dinner to-night—and it is the height of the season. Seven of them speak French, and the eighth, a lone and silent man, may be either a German or a Swiss.

At about nine o'clock, however, seven girls in their late teens came in together and registered. They wore heavy spiked boots, knapsacks, and short stout skirts; gay-colored silk handkerchiefs bound their hair. Their blond complexions were tanned a becoming saddle brown, and they had the walk of lioness cubs. Swiss girls these, enjoying the universal national sport of their people—and enjoying it all the more, perhaps, in that the Swiss have Switzerland mainly to themselves. Last Saturday morning, in Bern, I noticed that the streets were full of children walking in companies, stout spiked shoes on their feet and knapsacks on their backs. They, under escort of their teachers, were off for a climb.

GRINDELWALD, August 12th.

This resort, which lies at an elevation of some two thousand feet in a cleft between the highest



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peaks of the Bernese Oberland, has always been a great center—perhaps the greatest center—for mountaineering. Here also the Jungfrau dominates the landscape. Scheidigg, where I passed last night, the Yoke of the Jungfrau, where I stood yesterday afternoon, are both visible, a sheer and dizzy height above us.

One who follows that sport can get all varieties of climbing here, from ascents that are not made successfully more than once in two years—thorough and dangerous expert work—to ascents that require only legs and wind. This is probably the reason why the English, the sporting race, had almost taken Grindelwald to themselves before the war. This is a German canton, but all the street signs are in triplicate—German, English and French; and in most cases the English phrase has precedence. A few years ago Grindelwald made itself a winter resort; and it was almost as gay and as well populated in January as in August.

To-day, in the height of the summer season, it looks like a resort during the last week of autumn. A few French soldiers, interned, are quartered here; for them some of the humbler hotels keep open. The big and famous hotel where I am staying has four hundred beds, and at present only fifty guests. The main dining-room is now as bare as a dancing floor; we dine in a little breakfast-room. One English family is registered; the rest are all French or Swiss. If the hotel has harbored any Germans this summer the proprie-

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tor would not admit the fact. This is the only large hotel open, and even it was closed during 1915 and 1916. Since the war there has been no winter season at all.

A resort like this, with many devices for amusement, must be kept up. In peace time the repairs to grounds, tennis courts, toboggan runs, rinks and the like, together with the upkeep of lawns and gardens, are financed by the system of "kur-cards." A tax of a few cents a day is added to the hotel bill of each guest. In return the guest gets a card which entitles him to a reduction—usually twenty-five per cent—on the price of admission to the amusement places. There being no guests to speak of, there is no kur-card revenue; nevertheless, the plant must be kept up. The hotels themselves must meet the expense. That, and the necessity of paying interest on their loans, are beginning to drive the Swiss hotels fast into bankruptcy. Why the proprietor opened his hotel this season he did not tell me, but I think I can guess. He was speculating on the close of the war this summer. Switzerland, which wants nothing of the war except its early finish, took heart last spring from the Russian Revolution. Now the Swiss believe that the war has still a long time to go.

Roped to Conrad, licensed guide, I took a short but dizzy climb this morning across the Upper Glacier. Upon the question of his business, Conrad, being interviewed, said: "Business is noth-

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ing—nobody comes.” Being further pressed he said that the guides would all have starved if they didn’t, mostly, own little farms. He wanted to know when the war would end. I held out no hopes of a finish this winter; whereupon he fell to cutting steps in the ice with an extra-vicious sweep of his ice pick, which showed that he was not pleased.

INTERLAKEN, August 14th.

This, I take it, is the most famous of the Swiss resorts. Perhaps some upstart hotel towns have achieved in recent years more smartness, but it may still be described as fashionable. Lying in a valley with a delicious soft climate, it commands, nevertheless, a glorious mountain view. Big lakes—as the name implies—stretch on either hand. It is no resort for those who want for their vacations a little of the good, bitter taste of hardship. Interlaken implies leisure, luxury, dancing, bridge, boating, swimming, tennis, driving, flirtation and clothes. Its hotels are the last word in summer luxury and in over-decoration. Along its main street run clothes shops which have no equal for smartness in the big cities of Switzerland. Or they did run. With one or two exceptions they are closed now.

The tale is almost the same as at Grindelwald. Of six or seven big hotels only two are open. The one where I am staying has accommodations for nearly two hundred guests, and only



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eighty people were registered that night. Things are even worse, the manager tells me, with the larger and more expensive establishment next door. Along the famous drive about the Lake of Thun lie dozens of smaller and cheaper hotels. Some of these now harbor interned soldiers. The rest, from the observation I took this morning, seem all to be shuttered.

Bankruptcy is merely imminent for Grindelwald. At Interlaken it is beginning to arrive; the weaker establishments are going fast into the hands of receivers.

Though I did not know it when I left Bern, I find that I have been making the rounds of the Entente resorts. I have not yet seen a single person whom I could positively identify as German or Austrian. It seems that trade follows the *internés*. Wherever French, British or Belgian soldiers are interned there come French, British and Belgian summer guests. In the resorts about Lucerne and the Rigi lie the German internment camps, and it would be hard, they tell me, to find French or English people there.

I had expected to encounter a class of people conspicuous in Switzerland, I understand, during the early days of the war—those soft and selfish persons who could not endure the stern new atmosphere and withdrew themselves from home and native land in order to go on with the old life. That class, I should say, is no more. So far as I can see, the guests in these resorts—except of

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course the Swiss—are war-weary people, driven by the necessity of health to get a little rest. They do not appear soft, but just worn out.

There is music in the Casino of afternoons; I had tea there to-day. This building, I should say, would accommodate a thousand people about its tables. In old years, as any one who reads guide-book fiction knows, the scene here was tremendously dressy if not smart. By actual count there were present to-day one hundred and twenty-seven people, mostly women and children. Many wore mourning. Of the rest no one was fashionable. The clothes seemed indeed the relics of wardrobes that dated from before the war. And except for the children's, no face looked happy.

The Swiss are superb hotel keepers, and I had no ill-cooked meal in all this trip through the Entente resorts. But the fare was simple, and the portions were calculated with an eye to economy. Usually—and this in hotels that gave a ridiculously long menu before the war—we got soup, perhaps fish, a meat-and-vegetable dish, salad, and a very simple dessert and fruit. The Swiss war bread, which is served sparingly, has more Indian corn than rye or barley in its composition, and is therefore more acceptable to the American taste than the French. With breakfast coffee in the Parisian hotels there come two lumps of sugar to each person, and no more. The same rule prevails here, only the lumps are very small—half the

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size of the French. There are other restrictions. For example, eggs and meat cannot be served at the same meal—ham and eggs is against the law. From this situation at good to first-class hotels, one may easily deduce that the shoe must be pinching in working-class homes.

BERN, August 17th.

This morning a green-aproned boots sped across the corridor of this hotel, carrying under his arm a most elaborately embossed brass helmet, to which, with his palm, he was giving the final polish. "What's that for?" I asked the head porter. "It is the Austrian Kaiser's birthday, and all the Germans and Austrians are going to church at eleven o'clock," he replied. When, later, I approached the assistant head porter and asked in English for the address of the church where services would be held in honor of the Kaiser, his well-controlled face took on an expression of alarm. Perhaps he thought he was facing a traitor, and again he may have thought that I intended to throw a bomb. All I wanted, of course, was to see the show from the outside.

A highly spectacular and entertaining show it proved, too. I had never seen the German Army except in campaign uniform. I had forgotten how much millinery the German officer wears on state occasions. As for the Austrian dress uniform—if such costumes were displayed for women's wear on the Rue de la Paix they would be hooted



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as loud and garish. There were white uniforms; pale satiny blue uniforms; garish red uniforms; sea-green uniforms; there were delicate pale-gray huzzar effects, frogged and heavily embroidered in silver. One person, whom I marked especially, wore rich sapphire-blue velvet, a long jacket bordered with sable fur hanging from his shoulder, half a dozen jeweled orders clanking on his chest, a shako with a straight tuft of feathers towering on his head.

In fact, I could fill several columns with descriptions of the headgear. One man—a high German officer I take it—topped off a uniform of white with gold trimmings by a shining brass helmet, which came down in a low sweep over his neck. It supported what looked like a stuffed white eagle, its wings outstretched and wearing a golden coronet. On the whole I am inclined to award him the prize as the best-dressed gent.

In the automobiles rapidly unloading before the church were women in their best finery, varying from Viennese smartness to expensive Berlinesse dowdiness; but the birds of female plumage were dimmed by the glory of their males. As these peacocks of war dismounted there was a primping that would have seemed excessive in the dressing-rooms of a Broadway show.

While they waited for service to begin, the assemblage stood on the pavement holding reception. I have a feeling somehow that this was done by conscious arrangement, in order to impress the

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Swiss. Perhaps I wrong them. Perhaps they did it because they liked it. Every lady had her best new right glove kissed again and again. It was a wonderful, sumptuous show—neither Belasco nor Henry Irving ever staged a better.

Yet on the whole the performance seemed lacking in spontaneous joy. One had a feeling that the Swiss crowd, standing silent about, were thinking of the contrast of the trenches. Finally bare-headed chamberlains in white and gold, who had been making a way through the crowd for important dignitaries, shooed the performers inside. For fifty minutes the services went on; then the church doors opened to pour out a kaleidoscope.

In the crowd were two interned French *poilus*, smiling sarcastically. Suddenly my memory went back a fortnight—to Paris. I remembered the men of France, and their baggy, ill-fitting uniforms. These uniforms come in only three sizes—large, medium and small. For comfort a man usually chooses the size too large rather than that too small. After a little turn in the trenches the color fades, and the horizon blue is streaked nearly always with dirty green. A French regiment on the march looks like a committee of the I. W. W. in uniform overalls. The officer has a better-fitting uniform than that of his men, and usually manages to keep it neater. Otherwise only the inconspicuous *galons* at his sleeve distinguish him from the private. And that is true, whether the occasion is the regular work in the trenches or an

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important public appearance. I saw Joffre on that great day when Pershing came to Paris. The fine old savior of civilization wore his perfectly plain working uniform, well brushed but a little old, and his simple round kepi, in the colors that mark him as a graduate of the Artillery and Engineering School. The only high color about him was the narrow line of service ribbons on his left breast. Such an exhibition as this of to-day would have been impossible during this war in any of the Entente countries.

“All dressed up like a kitchen stove with a boiled dinner,” remarked the American who watched beside me. “Say, the unnecessary junk on one of those fellows would keep a tenement family for a year.”

It would, probably. And the unnecessary junk on a French officer—whatever the occasion—would not keep a baby in cigars. I felt that I had seen with my own two eyes what we were fighting about. Democracy is civilization. Autocracy is dramatized barbarism.



## CHAPTER XIII

### THE RIOT AT GENEVA

GENEVA, August 29th.

At dinner last night we formed one of those curious parties this war is always bringing together. Between us, we had seen most of the corners of Armageddon. A British couple present had lived long in Turkey and the Balkans. In the brief delay between Germany's declaration of war and Turkey's, they had escaped from Constantinople to Italy on a crazily overloaded passenger steamer. A Serbian girl had gone through that awful retreat to Monastir. A Canadian captain was in Western Canada during July, 1914. On his way home to Ottawa he stopped for a little whirl at metropolitan life in Chicago. War interrupted his vacation. A week later he was applying for a commission; eight months later the Germans picked him up, wounded in five places, from a shell hole near St. Julien. Then, weary months of hard captivity; finally Switzerland and peace, broken now and then by another operation.

The Englishman spoke on the contradictions of Turkish character, on which subject he was both wise and amusing. Some of his remarks deserve recording:

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“The story I’m going to tell you,” he said, “is part fiction and part historic fact; but it’s probably all true, nevertheless. It begins with a little drama I have made up out of my head.

“Tallat Pasha, Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs, sits in his office, going over papers. He touches a bell, and Kemal, his secretary, enters. A fine, crafty old bird is Tallat Pasha, and Kemal is obedient and, for a Turk, very resourceful.

“‘Kemal,’ says Tallat Pasha, ‘what is a Socialist?’

“‘I do not know, Excellency,’ says Kemal. ‘What in time is a Socialist?’

“‘I asked you!’ says Tallat Pasha. ‘We must have some Socialists. Here is a letter from those troublesome people in Berlin. They say there will be a Socialist Conference in Stockholm and we are to send at least three delegates. Find me Socialists!’

“‘Very well, Effendi,’ says Kemal, and exits.

“A few hours elapse and he returns.

“‘There are no Socialists in Turkey,’ he says. ‘I do not know what they are; but there are none in Turkey.’

“‘Very well,’ says Tallat Pasha. ‘Send for Nassim Masaliah. He is a Jewish unbeliever, and may be almost anything. He is to be a Socialist and bring two other Socialists.’

“Nassim Masaliah is a deuced clever little lawyer, who has made a good deal of money out of the war by doing whatever the Government wants

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him to do. So Nassim Masaliah and two of his friends are dubbed Turkish Socialists and sent to Stockholm, with plenty of money for expenses.

“So far, the story is fiction; but that’s about how it must have happened. The rest is cold truth:

“Nassim Masaliah and his two associates, fellows of his own stripe, appeared at Stockholm for the preliminary conference. They blithely registered at headquarters as Turkish Socialists, and got a rousing welcome from their comrades. Their troubles began when the Swedish President of the Conference asked them pleasantly what school of Socialism they represented; also, he wanted their credentials.

“Nassim Masaliah is a resourceful man on his native soil, but here he was a little out of his element. He tried to hedge; but the president pinned him down.

“‘I don’t know,’ he said finally.

“‘You don’t know!’ said the president. ‘You come here as Socialists and you don’t know what school you belong to! Where are your credentials? What is the name of your organization?’

“Nassim Masaliah’s nerve was all gone by this time, and he said again:

“‘I don’t know. I was told to come to the Socialist Conference at Stockholm; and here I am.’

“Now all this time the German delegates had been winking and making signals at the three Turkish delegates. At this desperate moment



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they created some kind of diversion and led the Turkish delegation out into the hall. There they held an inquiry. Nassim Masaliah confirmed their worst fears. He didn't know the first thing about Socialism. He only knew that he'd been sent to Stockholm with orders to do everything the Germans told him to do. As for his associates, they knew nothing at all. They'd been eating well in Stockholm and they'd enjoyed the travel. Wasn't that enough?

“As you remember, the preliminary conference broke up in a disagreement and the real conference was postponed. The Germans took the three Turkish Socialists back to Berlin. They're now working eight hours a day with a professor of economics and an interpreter—studying Socialism. Back in Constantinople, an assistant of Kemal's is rounding up the rag-tag and bobtail of the city and forming them into Socialist locals, with officers. This is done on the advice of Nassim Masaliah, who wants something to represent when he presents his credentials again!”<sup>1</sup>

GENEVA, August 31st.

The foot of Lake Lemman and the head of the Rhone River divide this city into two parts. Half a dozen pretty bridges connect the New City, where I live, with the Old. At the head of each

<sup>1</sup> I have recently seen the German wireless press messages, sent out every night from Nauen for propaganda purposes. The issue of May 20, 1918, had an interview with Nassim Masaliah, “the eminent Turkish socialist!”

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bridge stands a public Square. I say this by way of explaining the events of yesterday. Also, here and now I explain that I have been keeping to myself while doing a job of writing. Consequently I missed all the preliminary signs of trouble.

I was buying some cigarettes in a little shop of the Old City when, glancing outside, I saw a crowd gathered on the quai.

“What is that?” I asked, rather glad to have an opening for a conversation with the pretty blond little woman who was counting out my change.

“It is a demonstration, monsieur, against the high cost of living,” she said. “You know,” she continued earnestly, “in Switzerland we have no king. The people—they are our king. When things are not as they should be we gather and protest. The people are the king in Switzerland!” she added, a little defiantly I thought; and I perceived that, from my accent in French, she took me for an Englishman.

I strolled over to the quai. A crowd of all ages and of both sexes stood about, talking in groups. Over by the river wall an orator had just finished speaking and was carrying away the packing box on which he had stood. The crowd began to drift away in knots. It seemed as though everything was over. On my way up to the university, where I had an appointment, I stopped in an old bookstore. A sound of song interrupted my reading. I poked my head outside; it was a procession.

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First came men and boys, roughly arranged four abreast. They were singing the International; and singing it, somehow, as though they meant business. At the head of each section floated the red flag of Socialism; here and there a particularly nasty-looking loaf of gray, hard war bread was carried aloft on a pole, by way of showing what it was all about. Behind the men straggled hundreds of women, some carrying empty market baskets, some dragging children. So far, though everything was grim and business-like, there was perfect order. The policemen, strung along the pavement one or two to each block, regarded the affair languidly. I had half a notion to break my engagement and follow; but there seemed little possibility of interesting events.

By making this decision I missed a good deal of action. Fifteen minutes later, as the procession approached the Hôtel de Ville, a tramcar drove across its path. Taking this as an affront, the crowd charged it, pulverized its windows with paving stones, damaged the conductor and the motor-man, and resisted with stones and fists a charge of the police. I arrived on the scene of action in time to behold a street strewn with broken glass, and a crowd of people who looked as though they were suffering from emotional strain drifting backward before the steady pressure of the police. On a corner two sergeants of the local force, dignified and elegant in blue uniforms, soldierlike



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kepis, silver lacings and epaulets, were completing an arrest.

Geneva has no hurry-up wagon, it appears. The police had just chartered an open horse cab, wherein they were setting down, with great emphasis, a man and a woman. The man, a little fellow in a workingman's smock, had a welt beside his right eye. The woman—large, fat, middle-aged—had her decent black bonnet knocked over one ear. She, like the man, was pale and set of feature; her expression seemed to indicate that she was in doubt whether to burst into tears or to bite a policeman. The cab drove away in the direction of the City Jail. Though I ranged the streets for half an hour, I saw no further action. A few small groups talked and gestured with great animation; and that was all. The riot, such as it was, seemed to be over.

However, as I left the hotel after dinner, I saw further signs. This building faces on a street; at its rear is a wide garden, running down to the lake quai. In going to town I have been accustomed to walk through that garden and let myself out on the quai by a gate in the high iron fence. As I started to take my usual route the porter stopped me.

“I'm sorry; but you can't go by this route,” he said. “We've locked the garden gate to-night.”

I understood this precaution. Beside our hotel stands another with the same arrangement of gardens; beside that is the German Consulate. Last

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autumn that hotel was the center of a very pretty riot. Much rumor had been running about Geneva concerning a certain man, whom I shall call Mr. Koch. He was reputed to be the chief German spy in these parts, and he lived in that hotel. One evening, after a pro-Ally demonstration across the river, several thousand people came trampling across the flower beds and formal lawns, to call on Mr. Koch. By way of a visiting card they presented a rope. Mr. Koch was not at home. Scenting trouble, perhaps, he had gone the day before to a resort in the mountains.

The mob, it appears, was not yet beyond listening to reason. The proprietor of the hotel made a speech from the balcony, assuring the crowd, on his honor, that Mr. Koch was not in his hotel and would not be allowed to return. The mob hesitated; the police, taking advantage of the psychological moment, began a steady pressure and cleared out the garden. The crowd dispersed, pausing only long enough to smash some windows in the German Consulate. Our hotel, it appears, was taking no chances; for we do harbor some Germans, besides an Austrian prince and a Turkish pasha or so.

Yet, when we reached the Old Town, where such troubles always start, all was peace. The lake surface glittered back rows of electric lights; the moon made mystery of tangled, narrow hill streets. The cafés ran brimful to the sidewalks, and crowds, with the gait of leisure, strolled along

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the quais, singing and laughing—lovers mostly, or family parties.

A cinema show with an American program flashed a luminous invitation. We entered, and grew homesick while watching stock saddles and Indians, and trains threading the Colorado Rockies, and homes of wealth and fashion furnished with trading stamps, and Charles Anderson foiling the sheriff, and Charlie Chaplin eating pie. Then, weary of a French three-reel domestic-triangle drama, we strolled out toward a Square that heads a bridge on the Old Town side. A block away from that Square we caught the murmur, the mixture of scream and roar, which emanates from a mob. We ran out into the Square.

It was packed with men—mostly poorly dressed and young. Under the arc lights I could see their faces working, their arms waving: As yet there was no action. Then, off by the lake embankment, I could make out some kind of struggle. From that direction the roar increased. And immediately the mob started—with what purpose I do not know. I doubt if they knew, themselves. From the rear, yelling men pressed against me, and I must set myself to the task of getting my wife out of the current to the curb. It was difficult, for she is a small woman; I had to protect her with my own body while struggling against the general rush.

When I had reached security and was getting



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my breath I saw that the crowd was milling about some center of disturbance and that the police were charging. They came across the square at a dogtrot, their silver braid and their epaulets making splashes against their dark uniforms. Each was carrying a long club, like a pike-staff sawed in two. On their flank skirmished some big fellows in citizens' dress, whose very feet betrayed them for plain-clothes men. A second later they were plowing their way through the mass.

At that moment I chanced to glance behind me. We were before a large and splendidly lighted café. Along a balcony on the second floor a group of men and women in evening dress—doubtless a private dinner party—watched the row with chattering interest. Beside me were two gilded young Genevese men about town, whose form-fitted evening clothes gave them the effect of being corseted. They had taken chairs from the sidewalk section of the café and were mounted thereon. Their faces expressed languid contempt.

“What is happening over there?” I ventured to ask the nearest.

He shrugged his shoulders.

“Much fuss for nothing!” he replied.

Doubtless he believed this, too. He had dined well. We had no more conversation; for a plain-clothes man, feeling that our section of the crowd was too far advanced, charged us, and the gilded youths got down from their chairs just as he kicked them from beneath their feet. By this time the

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police were coming back with their arrests. I have grown accustomed of late to the ways of the Parisian police, who handle a peppery people with the maximum of tact and the minimum of force. These Swiss police, however, seem to hold with the ideas of Bill Devery in the old days of the New York force. The first man, in charge of two policemen, seemed to have been knocked out. As they hauled him along, half erect, his feet were dragging on the ground. The second, shoved ahead of his captors, resisted arrest. He was digging in with his heels. Beside him trotted a plain-clothes man who, at regular intervals, cuffed him on the side of the head. The next one was walking, with forced willingness, before a policeman who had wrenched his arms behind him in a jiu-jitsu hold.

The rest of the police were clearing the square. I admired their method; they took advantage of the terrain. They split us into four sections, thus obtaining, like the German Empire, the advantage of inner strategic lines. One, with which I was numbered, they sent to the right along the lake embankment; another they forced to the left; another was herded up the narrow dark street which runs into the Old Town; and still another—this the largest and most dangerous—they clubbed along the bridge. Halfway across the bridge, the police formed their lines. Beyond them, in the moonlight, we could see the crowd weaving and rushing.

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Ten minutes passed. Our part of the crowd was quiet and orderly; I perceived that the trouble, if it came at all, would come on the bridge. I approached a sergeant and tried to explain that I was an American journalist and wanted to see the show. I got the same response that a Swiss journalist would have received had he approached a Broadway policeman holding fire lines with a parallel proposition. And just then the murmur on the bridge turned into a roar. A flying squadron of policemen detached itself from the Square and ran to reënforce the hard-pressed line on the bridge. Dimly we could see forms piling up in the center of disturbance. Suddenly the crowd broke and went backward; the police cleared the bridge to the other side.

This looked like the finish. But it wasn't; for the crowd, driven backward, seemed to be rushing of its own motion along the opposite bank. "Going for the Germans!" chuckled some one in the crowd; and I got the point. Across there stood the German Consulate; the disturbers, with logic rare in a mob, had started for the true fountain-head of their troubles. I ran down to the next bridge and crossed; but I arrived too late. In the region of our hotel all was peace, save where a policeman or two kept stragglers moving along.

However, as I learned this morning, the best fight of the evening occurred near the German Consulate. A body of reserves had been drawn round it by way of precaution. As the mob came



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on, the reserves charged out to meet it. By this time the rioters, so often baffled by superior strategy, were in an unpleasant mood, and they showed fight. The reserves held on until the police from the bridge, swinging round the crowd, joined them and beat the rioters back with their clubs. One policeman had his arm broken, and two more are in the hospital this morning with internal injuries. The receiving hospitals worked all night with blackened eyes and cracked crowns. Seventy citizens of Geneva, including six women, are in jail this morning charged with disturbing the peace or violently resisting an officer of the law. I learn, also, that demonstrations, though none so violent as this, occurred in other Swiss cities—it was a joint plan of the Socialists and the Syndicalists, who represent, roughly, our I. W. W.

I could not help but sympathize with this demonstration; for the cost of living is ruinously high. It goes without saying that Switzerland has more food and better prospects of getting food in the future than Germany. But the prices of most commodities are higher here than across the Border. This is because the German Government has taken hold of the situation and enforced maximum prices for many standard commodities.

Here, the Government, perhaps because it has carried along from month to month the thought of an early peace, has taken but few measures to insure reasonable prices. It has stopped the speculator; but before this happened the food gam-

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blers had pretty nearly stripped the country of its accumulated supply. The people showed their teeth last night; and since, as the girl in the cigar stand said, the people are king in Switzerland, the federal authorities will doubtless be forced to take tardy measures of relief.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE LAST OF THE TOURISTS

MILAN, September 2d.

CROSSING the Border from suspected Switzerland to suspicious Italy was hardly a pleasant experience. I have myself to thank. Usually, in crossing between belligerent and neutral countries, I keep on my person or in my baggage only such written matter as I need to establish my identity. The rest of my necessary documents—such as letters of introduction, notes and unfinished manuscripts—I post to myself at my new address, so that the mail censor may examine them at his leisure.

This time, my caution lulled to sleep by recent good luck at the Spanish-French and French-Swiss frontiers, I carried everything—letters of introduction, letters lately received from America, copies of old manuscripts, and notebooks. Hence a disagreeable hour of stripping, turning out linings and pockets, hot debate and fruitless explanation. I might have been there yet, and I should certainly have been forced to leave my papers behind, had it not been for an American in the Diplomatic Corps who was making the same journey. He had peeped through the windows of the deten-



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tion shed to see what was delaying the train; and he observed my fix.

At once he sought out the authorities and vouched for me. So, when things looked blackest, I was suddenly released, with papers and luggage. Truth to tell, my passport—the fifth I have carried since the war began—makes me an object of suspicion. The visé of either Spain or Switzerland counts against a traveler at any Allied frontier—and my passport has both!

So they loaded us on the train which travels from the Italian side of the Simplon Tunnel to Milan. In peace time the fastest express service runs from Geneva to Milan in six or seven hours. This run, to-day, takes nearly fourteen hours. The train had been held for the settlement of our case, it appears; for as soon as we established ourselves in the last vacant seats of the first-class section it started.

In the passage through the Simplon Tunnel, which runs under the Swiss-Italian frontier, we had crossed into a new climate. As we climbed the Alps on the Swiss side we were in rather cool and bracing summer weather; now the baking sun of Italy beat oppressively down upon us. During the burning middays of their hot summers the Italians keep interiors cool by pulling down all window shades. The same rule, we found, is enforced on the railroads. Our seats were on the sunny side. Whenever, in order to glimpse the terraced mountains, we tried to lift the curtain a

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little, a relentless guard rebuked us sharply and pulled it down.

On the other side ran a long corridor, its curtains raised, since it was on the shady side. Through those windows we could, at first, catch glimpses of the scenery; but at every way station a crowd of passengers piled aboard, with that wealth of hand luggage which the economical European carries in order to evade the tariffs of the baggage car. Since there were no seats left in the compartment, they disposed themselves on their baggage in the corridor—men, women and children; soldiers, civilians and officials.

One more station, and I had given up my seat to make room for a party composed of a mother, a peasant nurse, and two well-behaved little black-eyed girls of one year and three years. A plump and pleasant old Italian who sat beside us followed suit. The mother, a Milanese—pretty, young and smart—took her eldest on her lap; the maid accommodated the baby. She looked—this maid—as though she were made up for a costume party. Covering her coarse black hair she wore a kerchief of figured satin, coffee-colored. It was fastened by a pair of silver pins, with heavy, embossed heads. Her waist and stockings were white, her skirt was red, and her apron was a kaleidoscope.

The plump old Italian gentleman made the acquaintance of this party at once; and occasionally, when the mother grew weary, he would relieve her of the three-year-old, whom he would entertain

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with his watch chain or with the bunch of evil-eye charms hanging from his wrist.

The ladies found that by squeezing they could make room for another; and so a seat was found for a raving beauty, an Italian blonde, who, the focus of every eye, had been sitting on her suit case in the corridor. She had the true blond hair—not washed of color, but shot with light. She had a skin like clotted cream; a melting delicacy of feature; and great violet eyes, both fiery and soft. In her gray rajah traveling dress, her little hat, her neat American shoes, she was the last word in smartness. It was no surprise, therefore, to learn that she was just returning from Paris.

Immediately she opened conversation with the mother and the plump elderly gentleman. Being northern Italians of the educated class, they used Italian and French with equal facility, slipping from one language to the other so often and abruptly that I doubt if they could have told which they were speaking. When it was French I understood; when it was Italian I understood just the same—by the gestures.

Now the two women were talking clothes. How did I know? By the sweep of their hands across their figures. The beauty had seen such a dress in a window! How did I know that? Her white-gloved hands outlined the window and the dress. About the neck it was marvelous—such lace! Her two hands flopped to her own fair breastbone and



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a rippling motion of the fingers spun out the lace. By similar pantomime I learned that she had entered the store, had inquired the price of a haughty saleslady, and had found it frightfully, incredibly high. It is useless for northern peoples to study gestures; we can never attain to the heights of the most stolid Latin.

Shifting to French, they spoke on social topics, and men. Such was the scarcity of men in Paris, observed the beauty, that officers on leave must dread the ordeal; they are pursued so shamelessly. Last week she had attended a tea where there were twenty women and two officers. Those women didn't give them a chance to breathe!

"In Milan," put in the mother, "in Milan, society resembles one of those chases in the moving pictures!"

We crawled and stopped, crawled and stopped; and at every station we crammed on still more passengers. We were running now past the Italian lakes, a region of such incredible beauty as to resemble the vision of some fantastic painter rather than a combination of trees, earth, water, brick and stone. Whenever, peering past the crowd in the corridor, I could glimpse the landscape, it seemed to me like a region asleep. September is usually the height of the season in the northern Italian resorts. Now the placid surfaces of the lakes were unbroken by boats; the driveways were deserted; the hotels had their shutters closed.

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Already I could perceive the change that had come over Italy since, in the late spring of 1916, I last saw the country. Then the war—for Italy—was less than a year old. Then trains ran and hotels accommodated guests as ever. Turin, where I first stopped at that time, seemed even a little more gay than usual; coming there from Lyons was like coming from war to peace. But this train looked like war; and so, by little signs—such as the condition of the stations and the dinginess of all painted objects—did the country in general. I noticed, too, the shabbiness of the uniforms in comparison with their fresh smartness a year before—a sure proof of hard service.

As we slid into the Lombard plain it became chokingly hot. I grew weary, very weary, of standing. So, of course, did the Italians. But they made no special sign. In their sociable Latin fashion they had all got acquainted; to the very end they chattered like magpies and gesticulated like electric fans.

At the Milan Station I had further proof that Italy is at war. I could get no porter to assist me with my hand luggage, which is complicated by a heavy typewriter. A flagman, just off duty, saw me toiling along loaded like a pack mule and offered, for the tip of a lira, to assist. When he dumped me on the sidewalk outside I found that the hotel omnibuses had been hauled off the run months before. It was useless for me to take a

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tramcar, as I was new to the city and had not the slightest idea where my hotel lay.

The rest of the first-class passengers, I found, had lined up on the curb with bag and baggage, and were struggling for the little one-horse cabs which occasionally loomed in sight round the corner. I joined the struggle. On account of my ignorance of the language, it was half an hour before I secured at last a free taxicab, and was whirled to that old-fashioned hotel where Verdi lived out the last twenty years of his life, and where, as a tablet shows, he died.

This hotel is famous for its cooking, which was why Verdi, gourmet as well as composer, lived there. But when, being by now very hungry, I asked for the dining-room I found it was closed for the period of the war. "We simply couldn't keep it going in view of the high prices and the scarcity of guests," said the manager. "And we didn't want to let down our standards—our best cooks are all mobilized."

We sought a restaurant down the street, where, encountering an Italian friend, we were introduced to the great dish of the country—fresh figs and thin-sliced smoked ham. That sounds like a strange combination—but try it! If you cannot get fresh figs, melon does almost as well.

MILAN, September 5th.

Industrially and commercially, this city is the heart of Italy; in fact, the practical, energetic



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Lombard, with that local pride which always marks the hustler, will tell you Milan is first among Italian cities, and the rest nowhere.

"A Milanese," runs a modern Roman legend, "was trading conundrums with a Neapolitan.

" 'My first,' said the Milanese, 'is R O; my second is M A; my whole is the capital of Italy.'

" 'That's easy,' said the Neapolitan; 'Roma'—Rome.

" 'Not at all!' said the Milanese. 'Milan!'

Center of a great industrial region, which manufactures nearly everything, and especially silks, it is to the visitor the most pleasing industrial city in the world. Because it uses much electric power it is not sooty, like Pittsburgh or Lille; nor is it dour, like Manchester and Glasgow; nor matter-of-fact, like Lyons. The architecture and the general plan have the qualities of lightness and gayety, expressed in brick and stone, which suggests Paris. The old wars that surged over the rich Lombard plain spared some of its antique monuments, which still dot the center of the city.

Concerning the Cathedral, that pretentious exhibition of stone lace, I need not write. It is one of the famous buildings of the world; if for no other reason, because architects differ so widely and bitterly concerning its merits. Two hundred yards from the Cathedral you are in a patch of the Middle Ages—an old market piazza, surrounded by palaces. At the end of a main street

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rises the battlemented castle that used to defend the town.

The thing, however, which distinguishes Milan in my esteem from all other cities I have ever seen is that singular institution, the Galleria Vittorio Emmanuele.

Imagine, first, four city blocks of shops and business buildings surrounded by arcades. Now it stands to reason that through these four blocks run two streets, crossing each other, and each two blocks long. Imagine, then, that the sidewalks of these streets have been extended from curb to curb, covering the space usually devoted to wagon traffic. Imagine that from cornice to cornice of the four-story buildings—all of equal height—run arched skylights of frosted glass, completely protecting the pavement from rain and sun. Imagine that over the center of the Greek cross formed by the skylights is a high dome, also of frosted glass. There you have the Galleria.

No wheeled traffic traverses it, but only pedestrians. It is cool in the most blistering summer weather; it is bone-dry in the spring and autumn rains. In spite of pretentious ornaments and mural decorations it is not beautiful. It has none of the simple majesty of the Pennsylvania Station in New York, a conception quite similar. But that is comparing it to the absolute. At the risk of seeming a spread-eagle Yankee, I register my opinion that the best architecture produced in the United States during the past twenty-five years

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is the world's high-water mark for the period.

What brings you back to the Galleria again and again is the human note. It surges life. Along its borders run the principal cafés. No Latin eats or drinks indoors if the weather permits; and one may, with comfort, sit in the Galleria during eight months of the year. So chairs and tables, almost always occupied, block half of the space from curb to curb. Between the cafés stand fashionable shops. The *Corriera della Sera*, for power and reputation the leading newspaper of Italy, has its office in a corner under the dome.

Sit down before one of the cafés at any hour between nine o'clock in the morning and midnight, and you behold a fascinating procession, which comprises every element in north Italian life, from peasants with gaudy headdresses to smart and always beautiful women of the *bourgeoisie*. By habit, soon acquired, you come to make all your appointments for the Galleria. Here, rather than to his club, repairs the tired business man of Milan for his *apéritif* and his chat before dinner. Always there resounds from wall to wall the musical bubbling hum of Italian conversation.

Now, because of the war, the Galleria has become doubly interesting. Soldiers, in the variegated styles of Italian uniform, give color to every group. A detachment home on leave, still stained with the mud and filth of the trenches, and still festooned with rusty packs, strolls past, looking at shops, cafés and pretty women with grateful,



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animated eyes. Groups of officers give the correct military touch—your Italian is likely to be a well-set-up man and the uniform has attractive lines.

Dining in the Galleria last night, my attention was called to a plump and pleasing woman of middle age who was eating spaghetti with her knife and smacking her lips at every bite. The Queen of Sheba never wore more jewels; and inspection convinced me that they were real, not imitation. Whenever she wielded her knife her many bracelets—all of gold, set with gems—rattled like armor.

“Munitions!” said my Italian friend. “But from early in the war, mind you. In the beginning our government didn’t see the munitions situation clearly, any more than the other governments, and fortunes tumbled into the laps of people who never had money before. That was stopped long ago.”

Milan is in this war up to the neck. She is working all the more earnestly in that she belonged to Austria only a generation ago and holds a long memory of old misrule. She has borne her share of the burden of losses in this war of unprecedented killing. In Paris no café orchestra has performed since the war began. Up to last spring, it was a breach of good manners to play the piano in your own home. Once, on my way down the stairs of an apartment house, I began humming a tune. A Frenchman who accompa-

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nied me gave me a mild rebuke—people who heard me would be offended, he said. But in the cafés of the Galleria two excellent orchestras play afternoon and evening, and crowds block the footway to listen and to applaud. All the evening, voices singing in the full, high Italian tenor float through the windows of our hotel.

I realize now that the Italy of the tourist is, for the present, dead. It was not so last year. Except in the war zone, every gallery was open, every church crypt. The few people who had the leisure and the permission to travel roamed in luxury through the beauties of Italy, feeling that they had the country all to themselves. Your tourist is the most exclusive snob in existence; he is happiest when relieved from contact with his own kind.

Now Milan, although preëminently industrial, is yet a station of any art pilgrimage through Italy. That most famous of all paintings, Leonardo da Vinci's "Last Supper," is here, irremovably fixed in the plaster of the Dominican Monastery. In some respects its galleries are second only to those of Florence and Venice. But the little refectory which holds the Last Supper is double locked, and the picture, I understand, has been thoroughly protected with either sandbags or steel. The galleries are all closed to the public; and the priceless pieces, such as Raphael's Marriage of the Virgin, are gone to some safe and secret place.

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A treasure of the Cathedral was its set of stained glass windows which streamed glory on its marble floors. The light of the Cathedral is now dun and commonplace; the old stained glass has been taken out and replaced by plain, brown panes. Here and there a spot of blue or gold does splash the floors; it is cast by a piece of inferior modern glass not considered worth saving. And the sculptures—even to one whole altar—are concealed by solid banks of sandbags.

Milan, within a fairly easy aëroplane flight from the lines, is taking no chances. The city has, in fact, been raided once; and other attempts have been frustrated only by the vigilance of the Italian fighting aëroplanes.

FLORENCE, September 9th.

I shall have to take back a little of what I said about the Italy of the tourist. Florence, the City of Beautiful Things, still keeps a fairly open house for all who come to see. In this, however, she is unique among Italian cities. Her past is her main reason for existence. By displaying what her giants of art left behind them, she gains her sustenance and her importance in the world. Close utterly her galleries and her palaces, and you would destroy what amounts to her main industry. And, though we are at war and the tourist flood is dammed, still there are drippings. A few women students of art, untouched by the war, remain; to shut up the galleries would drive



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them away and give the final blow to the hotels and pensions, already nearly ruined. It is hard for any one with the love of beauty in his nature to pass by Florence; so Italian soldiers from other parts of the Peninsula often find occasion to spend part of their leave here, thus bringing tips to the custodians and meager revenue to the hotels. A year ago last spring I found that everything was running as wide open as ever. Shortly after that, Italy, hitherto at war with Austria alone, declared war on Germany. Instantly the Germans worked up a tooth-gnashing hate against Italy. And Italians began to receive letters from hitherto esteemed German friends telling them what the aircraft of *kultur* were going to do to Florence.

As the Florentines tell me the story, those fiery missives always threatened two structures in particular—Giotto's Tower and the Pitti Palace. It is easy to see why the Germans picked Giotto's Tower. A vote among painters and architects would probably elect this as the most beautiful piece of building in the world. It is almost the symbol of Florence—its "lily." Its destruction would be an irreparable calamity.

The Pitti contains one of the three greatest Florentine art collections; the Germans appear to have picked it, rather than the more meritorious Uffizi and Belle Arti, because it is also a royal palace. Thus, to deliberate injury they would add delicious insult. Though a pretty long flight from the lines, Florence could be reached by bombard-

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ing planes; and it would be nearly impossible to drop a bomb anywhere near the center of the city without destroying something irreplaceable.

So, with due regard to her practical necessities, Florence too, took precautions. In the great galleries, you miss some of the most famous and valuable of the large canvases—perhaps I would better not say which. Of course, the beauty and value of a painting is not determined by its size. Many of the greatest, including most of Fra Angelico's, are tiny pieces of canvas or wood which could be carried away under a man's coat. These smaller pieces are still on exhibition; the guards, I believe, have been instructed what to do in case of a raid.

Such great structures as the Cathedral, Giotto's Tower and the Signorial Palace cannot be protected as a whole. However, the most valuable carvings and sculptures in the Cathedral are covered with sandbags. Some eight or ten feet from the ground, Giotto's Tower has a frieze carved by the master himself—that same frieze over which Ruskin raves through chapter after chapter. A scaffolding, heavily sandbagged, protects it. Across the square is the Baptistery, with its famous bronze doors. They also are protected against the heaviest explosion.

Next to the Signorial Palace is the Loggia dei Lanzi, a little gem of an open gallery where, before the war, the unemployed of Florence used to sun themselves about the bases of a half a dozen

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great statues. The two most valuable of these—Cellini's Perseus with the Medusa Head and the antique Rape of the Sabines—are covered by peaked sheds packed with neat rows of sandbags.

Michelangelo's Tombs of the Medici, the height of the master's performance and of Renaissance sculpture, are protected too, but in such a manner that they may still be seen. This has been done very ingeniously. I shall not go into details, but it is probable that a direct hit from the heaviest bomb would not even scratch them. Most of Giotto's remaining Florentine work, being in the form of frescoes low down among the ornaments of great churches, is already protected by layer after layer of heavy masonry. These pictures, therefore, are still open to inspection.

A few other famous pieces are shut from sight owing to special necessities of the war. For example, the old Palace of the Medici, with Gozzoli's joyous Procession of the Magi in its private chapel, is now police headquarters for the city. The police are too busy to bother with tourists; and so the chapel is closed. Yet when all is said, these few exceptions are scarcely missed in the general beauty of Florence.

Living by art and the tourist, the city is hard hit. What has happened to the hotels, I have described before. Retail trade had mostly to do with commerce in art or near-art; that too is flattened out. I should say that half of the dealers in art, antiques and curios have closed their doors.



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One goes down streets of drawn shutters, which recall those of Paris in the first winter of the war. Ten thousand people, skilled and usually high-priced workmen, were employed in the business of reproductions. Honest workmen all, it was not their fault if the middlemen worm-holed one of their Medici-period chairs and worked it off on an American millionaire as a genuine antique! As a matter of fact, there exists a legitimate demand for reproductions—from museums and from people who love the genuine enough to want the imitation. This trade is dead. One or two workshops are still making pieces, on order, for museums; and that is all.

For a time, as hotel after hotel, shop after shop, went into bankruptcy, war suicides were common. Sad among these cases was that of the Man Who Looked Like Roosevelt. The resemblance, they say in Florence, was so startling that our Teddy, on his trip round the world, called on his double—he kept a book shop—and presented him with a signed photograph. With the horror of the war and the state of his business, he went mad. He tried to drown himself in the Arno, and was pulled out; he tried to hang himself, and was cut down. His second attempt at drowning himself succeeded.

Finally Florence, driven back on her own resources, found ways and means. A humble canning factory helped most of all to revive prosperity for this home of art; for Tuscany, of which

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Florence is the metropolis, bursts with fertility, and these are the days when all perishable foods must be consumed or rendered imperishable. So Florence has taken a little heart, and has settled down to the condition of an average Italian town, living on itself—not on the outside world. The cafés at night, the avenues and squares in the cool of the evening, have even a little touch of gayety. It is all native; for, though she keeps open house for the tourist, he comes but little. Of which I can give no better proof than this:

Yesterday I visited San Marco, the convent first made famous by Fra Angelico, the Heavenly Painter, and afterward by Savonarola. Once, the tourists came by hundreds every day. It is still open, for the fee of a lira at the door. Fra Angelico, as all the world knows, decorated with a sacred painting every cell of his fellow monks. Now in that cell which holds the painting of the Annunciation I brushed away a spider web, stretching from post to post of the door!

FLORENCE, September 12th.

I am, I profess, ordinarily quite indifferent to what I eat, provided only that it comes in sufficient quantities and at fairly regular intervals. My friends and family say that I never know what I am eating. That period of my life is past. In this war world, I find, the matter of primitive food occupies a good deal of my thought and attention.

Breakfast, as we understand the meal, is an in-

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stitution unknown in France, Italy and Southern Europe in general. Upon rising in the morning you have coffee, with a roll, and perhaps fruit or marmalade. Luncheon comes early, usually at twelve or half past; there the Continental makes a hearty meal. Americans and Englishmen, resident in France or Italy, soon get the habit of the country and lose the taste for a heavy breakfast.

Our coffee at Milan came with bread, but no butter. To make up for that we had a little pot of honey. On a saucer beside the cup was one tiny square of lump sugar. Really, the little thing would not have looked unduly large or loud if set in an art-jewelry ring. It mildly flavored the coffee.

That very day we found a way to beat the game. Feeling indisposed, in the hot weather, toward dinner, we repaired to a café in the Galleria and ordered hot chocolate, with biscuits. The chocolate was sweetened in the pot; but the waiter, through some flaw in the system, brought, also, two little sealed wax-paper bags, each containing a mathematically measured teaspoonful of sugar. Glancing carefully about, lest the police should discover me in the act, I slipped the two little bags into my pocket; and so we had enough sugar for breakfast next morning.

Thus every afternoon while we were in Milan we had hot chocolate, whether we wanted it or not, and held out the sugar. In Florence, however, the afternoon chocolate comes unsweetened. Our al-



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lowance of sugar with morning coffee is that same measured teaspoonful.

Last night I heard a woman, who owns houses, lands, motor cars and jewels, talk long and earnestly with her attorney over a purchase of sugar. She had been offered at private sale twenty-five kilos, or about fifty pounds. The question was, first, whether it had not been stolen—so great a quantity looked suspicious, she thought—and, second, whether she could legally have so large a quantity in her possession.

This has been a red-letter day in my gastro-nomic history of the war. I have eaten white wheat bread for the first time in six months—and have done so legally. I went to tea at the villa of an American. Like most of the famous old Florentine villas, it was once half country residence and half farmhouse. The farm and the apparatus for working its products have come down intact through the ages. He makes his own wine on the place; he presses out his own olive oil; and every autumn his workmen thresh out his wheat with a flail and grind it in a primitive mill.

Now the war law of Italy provides that a man may keep for his own use flour made from wheat grown, threshed and ground on his own place. Not for him the eighty per cent milling and the mixture with other grains! He may grind as he pleases. So he grinds it white. He has not enough for steady all-the-year consumption, but only for special occasions. At this moment I

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contain three genuine American beaten biscuits and two slices of lemon layer cake. Even after this excess, I found it hard to be a hypocrite and say that I had enough; but I felt as though I was wantonly wasting gold dust.

Let me not imply that I am not getting enough to eat. Italy is taking care of the food supply, seeing that all get enough and that no one gets too much. I am merely pointing out that when a man is deprived of his accustomed rations he realizes how much of a slave he is to his most primitive appetite.

## CHAPTER XV

### THE VOICE OF ISRAEL

SORRENTO, September, 1917.

VESUVIUS, in the background of the sea view, was streaming a plume of smoke across that white splotch on a distant hill which was Naples. Three hundred feet below the terrace where we sat, lateen-rigged Neapolitan boats were unloading melons at a stone breakwater, which slashed into the deep blue of the bay. On one side of the breakwater bathers splashed and wallowed; against the black bottom, visible to a great depth in that clear water and from that height, their figures seemed to crawl like worms on dark cloth. On the other side, fisherwomen, their heads bound in red handkerchiefs, pulled rhythmically at the ropes which terminated the great loop of a gill net.

Everything was incredibly picturesque; but more—everything was soaked in history. Just beyond the headland on our right you could see the long slope of Vesuvius fade away to a beach. There, a profile of stone pines marking the spot, lay the buried and resurrected Pompeii. On that headland beyond Naples, now buried in mist, now peeping vaguely through, was Baiæ, where Brutus



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and Cassius plotted against Cæsar; where, in the tale of Anatole France, Agrippina the dabbler met, twenty years after, old Pontius Pilate. Row for ten minutes from the breakwater and you could see Capri, soaked with memories of Tiberius, of Agrippina, and of Nero.

History, I suppose, stirred in David Lubin, as it did in me; for I am an observer and he an actor in a crisis of history beside which the crises that had surged over these quiet waters and enchanted shores were as a schoolboy's tug of war. Then again, Lubin is a poet, though he usually translates his thought not into meters, but into actions. So we fell to talking, he leading the way, on this troubled world and its future. As he talked I realized that I was getting, at last, a singularly interesting interview. I had come down from Naples to ask him, as American delegate and moving force of the International Institute of Agriculture, about the present condition and future prospects of the world's food supply. And I had found that the Institute, whose main usefulness is its interchange of facts between nations on the world's production, had already told all there was to say. It occurred to me now that I had in Lubin expression, the most eminent expression, of the international point of view. That was what he was—the world's greatest internationalist; and yet an American—a Jew in religion, and with the controlled imagination of the Hebraic race.

He had been many things, but mostly a depart-

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ment-store owner and farmer in California, when he conceived the idea that gave the larger usefulness to his life. A philosopher, tilting at all the follies of this world, he had perceived that agriculture is the foundation of civilization, and that it was not getting its dues in the social organization. He saw that the lack of official information on the supply made it possible for the profits of farming to be gobbled up by middlemen; the world's staple supply of food to be cornered at the will of crafty and irresponsible manipulators. The trouble here, he concluded, was largely lack of accurate data. A man in Kansas, getting ready to market his wheat, had no certain knowledge of the wheat crop in Argentina or India, or the whole world; and yet the state of crops in Argentina, India and the whole world was vital to his business. Some sources of information there were; but all were unofficial, imperfect or insincere.

He passed this quandary up to Secretary Wilson, of the Department of Agriculture. "It's the one great problem about farming," said Wilson; "heaven knows how it can be solved!" To Lubin the problem was solvable; the remedy, he felt, was simple, as all great things are. An international bureau of information should be officially supplied by the Government, with reliable data on the staples; should assemble and summarize them; and should make them available to farmers and all who handle the produce of farmers. An enthusiast, Lubin hammered Wilson with this idea.

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Wilson could not see it. He did much for agriculture in his time; but here he missed a chance for immortality.

The time came when Wilson would receive Lubin no more. So, like a Columbus on the back trail, Lubin packed up and started for Europe. He tried the English. The slow British imagination did not grasp his idea. He tried the French; and, but for a stroke of bad luck—the misinterpretation of an interpreter—he might have landed his scheme in Paris. But it fell through. He sent out feelers toward Germany and found that, though the Germans welcomed any idea which would improve German agriculture, they were less than indifferent to improvement in world agriculture. He brought up at last in Rome. The enlightened King of Italy listened to him; in 1908 the International Institute of Agriculture, with the principal nations of the world represented, was inaugurated at Rome. Since then, the remotest rancher in the world may know, if he cares to, the world situation in his particular staple.

In this crisis the Institute has been of infinite help to the civilized nations of the world. Had the war occurred ten years ago, the warning that food supplies were running low, that we must harbor and economize, might have come too late. It would have come, also, only after elaborate and costly search by special commissions. In 1916 and 1917 one had only to consult the monthly crop-reporting cables of the Institute to know that



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the wheat crop of such-and-such a country, from a normal of one hundred had shrunk to seventy-two; that the barley crop of that other country was only eighty-three.

The Institute has done many other things, which I shall not catalogue here; but the regulation of the world's food supply, through accurate and official information, has been its special service.

The man who made the Institute sat there before me, his eyes wandering now and then toward the panorama of history, or leaping back to my eyes with a glint of humor or of enthusiasm. He has a face both strong and whimsical—a wide mouth, firm, yet humorous; a full head of unruly iron-gray hair; a short straight nose, rounded at the point. His frank and candid blue eyes gaze at you from under eyebrows as thick and as white as rolls of cotton wool. His broad and stalwart figure belies his real condition; for he is not in robust health—is, in fact, harnessed to one place at a time. Now and then, as he talks, his words die away; he closes his eyes and breathes heavily for a minute—one of his heart spasms has caught him. Two minutes afterward, as likely as not, he is bursting out on some folly of his times with a vehemence of voice and gesture which gives his listener an uneasy concern lest he injure himself.

Now he was running free on one of his special hobbies—the confederation of democracies against war. Long before that idea grew fashionable, he had been exploiting it to whomsoever would listen.

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Indeed, his International Institute of Agriculture was only a cog in his general scheme of world machinery; of an ultimately dominating world democracy. And at this moment he was speaking not as an American, but as an internationalist.

“This war was bound to come,” said Lubin; “bound to come! Two forces were running opposed to each other, like two express trains. When they get on the same track what happens? Collision had been avoided again and again; but they were bound to get on the same track sometime. And those two forces are—”

Here he paused and, smiling whimsically, turned his eyes upon my face. He expected an answer, I saw.

“Democracy and autocracy?” I ventured weakly.

He threw out his arms with an explosive gesture.

“No!” he cried; and his voice exploded too. “Judaism and paganism! I am a Jew,” he went on. “I’ve heard Germans say: ‘You can’t understand this *kampf*; it is the world’s *kultur-kampf*. You’re a Jew!’ And I say: ‘Patience! We had the law when you sat in front of your cave, sucking a bone. You filled the skull of your enemy with beer and drank “To our chiefs in Valhalla!” until you rolled over dead to the world, and your squaw came and dragged you into your cave by the foot!’ I’m not speaking loosely. I’m talking by the book. It’s all written down in

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Cæsar's Commentaries. And we had the law—had it for centuries—when you Anglo-Saxons were coming down out of the trees. It's written there—”

Lubin rose, with one of his sudden alarming shows of force, vanished from the piazza to his sitting room, and returned with an armful of books. He dumped them down on the table and selected a King James Bible. I opened it at random. And my eye lit on this passage in Revelation:

And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled.

I read it to Lubin.

“It's an old Scotch superstition—‘pricking the Bible’—that if you open it at random and take the first passage your eye lights upon, it's a prophecy or a word of guidance,” I said. “I hope that's true!”

“The beast!” said Lubin, ignoring the superstition, but grasping at an idea. He waved a hand to indicate a world beyond the bulk of Vesuvius, trailing her smoke plume out to the north. “That's what it is up there—the beast. But it's only one manifestation. We've had these two tendencies always—the angel and the beast. Did it ever occur to you,” he went on, shifting his point of attack abruptly, as he has a way of doing, “that there's hardly a word about politics from



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cover to cover of the New Testament? Only one that I think of—and that has been terribly mis-handled, misinterpreted, misunderstood—‘Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar’s, and to God the things that are God’s, and Paul’s commentary—to obey the powers that be, for they are ordained of God. But the Old Testament is a political document. For we understood righteousness in masses; we taught that righteousness exalteth a nation. Oh, yes; we were untrue to our faith often. Who isn’t? We had kings. We made wars. But we were the first, the very first, to conceive the idea of big corporate morals; that nations like individuals were to be under the yoke of the law.

“When my boy was at Harvard he sent to me for a volume of Blackstone. I looked it over before I sent it on. And I read this—written only a little over a hundred years ago, mind you—‘Land is vested in the king.’ The law of Israel vested land in God. No one—not even the king—could remove the landmark without being responsible to God—which was, in this case, manifested in the will of the people. For removing the landmark the prophet Elijah removed the crown from Ahab, and Jezebel was thrown to the dogs. The farmer was not to be deprived of his land; there were to be no renters—only free men, not servitors. The Jews were forced to become wanderers on the face of the earth; but they carried this idea of freedom with them. Equal opportunity, a

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fair chance for all, justice—and, above all, the Messianic idea of justice between nations. But there was the beast—the pagan beast drinking from his enemy's skull. And the beast had many forms. He was not only murderous kings and lying diplomatists and Cæsar and Napoleon; they were queer indirect forms—opinions.”

Lubin suddenly snatched two books from the table and held them up. One was Spencer's "First Principles"; the other was the "Guide of the Perplexed," by Maimonides.

"You know Spencer, I suppose," he said. "Do you know anything of Maimonides? No? Let me tell you about him. This Maimonides was a Jew. Therefore he had, of course, a crafty disposition. Spencer had finished the first hundred pages of his book. Somehow—I don't exactly know what trick he used, but he was a Jew and crafty, as I say—Maimonides sneaked into Spencer's study, stole these first hundred pages of his book and plagiarized them. There they are; read them when you have time. The circumstantial evidence seems absolute. There is only one thing about the story that puzzles me"—Lubin leaned forward, transfixed me with his clear blue eye, and smiled—"Maimonides died seven hundred years before Spencer. Still, I suppose you can explain that little discrepancy—how Maimonides came to know so much of what is contained in Herbert Spencer's 'First Principles'—if you take time enough. Perhaps a German *Kulturist* could.

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“Maimonides was the mentor of Spinoza; but look what Spinoza has written!”

He opened another book, and I read a passage from the *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*, which I quote from memory:

Therefore, the sovereign state is not under the moral law. Acts immoral or punishable in an individual may be considered moral when performed by the state.

“And there you are!” said Lubin. “And there you are! The creed of the pagan state; the creed of the beast! But it’s logical—mind you that! A missionary, just arrived, asked a heathen chief: ‘What is good?’ ‘That I may take my neighbor’s wives and oxen,’ said the chief. ‘And what is evil?’ ‘That my neighbor takes my wives and oxen.’ In the beginning the world was void and there were no morals. The strongest savage went out with a club and brained his neighbor, and took away his ox and his woman. ‘Well,’ people said, ‘we can’t get along like this; it’s too disturbing. If this keeps up there won’t be anything left of us but just that fellow.’ So they got together and had a powwow, and passed rules of conduct. Then they agreed that the first fellow who broke the rules should have the whole tribe on his neck. So we began to have morals; and then came Israel and the law, and the commandments. Thou shalt not kill! And if you do society will take care of you. But get this—it couldn’t exist without the agreement of society. It needed force; corporate



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force—every one getting together and agreeing that if John was wronged by James all the rest should come down on James hard. We had the law inside the nations; but in the relations between nations—each was sovereign—there was anarchy! Anarchy!”

Lubin burst out in another of his alarming explosions of voice and gesture. His heart troubled him after that, and he closed his eyes for a minute before he resumed:

“Isn’t it logical, then, that, under paganism, Germany should have torn up the treaty regarding Belgium? Isn’t it logical, under paganism, that any nation should tear up a treaty when it opposes its interests? Spinoza says that it is to be so as long as the nation claims to be sovereign; outside of the yoke of law.”

With a feeling that he was leading me into some mental trap I flew to the defense of my side in this war. Governments, I admitted, were at times terribly immoral. I felt sometimes that the ethics of any government were lower than those of the lowest person in the government.

“And yet,” I said, “look at England. Perhaps, in going to war for the defense of Belgium, the British Government did not think of the treaty obligation, but only of convenience—with Germany established on the Belgian coast, England was done for. Let us say that, for the sake of argument. Nevertheless, the British people would never have permitted the government to ignore its

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treaty obligations or to have sanctioned that outrage. If the government had wanted to keep out of the war the people would have forced them to it. Four Englishmen out of five who enlisted in the Kitchener army joined because of their indignation against Germany for tearing up that treaty."

"And why?" asked Lubin. "Why can Germany tear up a treaty when England can't? Democracy—Israel triumphant, if you want to call it that. A hundred years ago that great anarchist, Napoleon, was devastating this country because he wanted it—just like the savage who thought that good was being able to take his neighbor's wives and cows. Not so long ago as that, England, as a government, also did rotten things. But they've gone over the bridge; have had their Passover—democracy. Democratic government can't get the people to stand for national anarchy; such things are gone and we are nearer the Jew's ideal. We went over the bridge from the first. Yes; we've been untrue to our faith, sometimes—who isn't? You see, people have been under the moral law a long time. Governments have never been placed under the moral law. Hebraism and paganism are the opposing forces now in deadly embrace in the world's great *kulturkampf*. Oh, yes; you may state it in many ways.

"Christianity is all right," he added, running suddenly up one of those little intellectual bypaths that, with him, always come back in the end to the main track. "There is nothing to criticize in

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Christianity whenever it is grandly Christian; for then it is also Hebraic. But it is often otherwise in some of the applications of Christianity. It's when they trot out the banners of a king who's going to conquer some innocent little country, and bless them—bless robbery and murder in the name of Christianity—that the reasonable Jew objects. It's when some upper class, in the name of a perverted Christianity, says to the poor: 'Oh, yes, I know you're miserable; but think of the glorious time to come! If you thank God that things are as they are, and behave yourselves, and leave us the fine clothes and the champagne, and the leisure and the glory, you'll be rewarded in heaven.'

“Israel's prophets and teachers always tried to bring the Kingdom on earth, as well as in heaven. And that's what I'm getting at when I talk of a confederation of the democracies creating the Kingdom. That is Jewish; that is Christian; it is not pagan. We've made progress within the nations. A man can't kill his enemy because he feels like it. If he does all society gets together and jumps on him—sees that he doesn't do it again. The nations ought to do, and can do, the same thing. They couldn't have done it a century ago, maybe. They weren't in touch. They couldn't understand each other. Now they are—they can understand each other if they will. Democracy hadn't conquered a century ago. It has conquered now in the allied nations. It swept China, and it swept Russia this year. Democracy



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is peace and justice—very close to the Kingdom.

“I wish I could get it to our boys over in Uncle Sam’s country—how different this war is from other wars! It isn’t in our nature to kill. You don’t see an American boy naturally taking a knife on the end of a gun and jabbing a man with it until he dies, and then going on and jabbing another man—doesn’t fit, somehow. Other wars—what did they matter? They’d spent their thousands of lives and the millions of money—for what? Ask them. We don’t know. Has it helped any one? We don’t know. Why did they do it then? We don’t know. But this—this matters! It’s worth your life and mine, and every one’s life. It’s the war of the Kingdom!”

Lubin had been talking too fast and hard. He rested a moment, panting, and then broke out, with one of his whimsical smiles:

“Doesn’t sound very original to you, does it? Well, it would have been original ten years ago, and plumb crazy about the time when Napoleon was ravaging that city over there. What did they know of the confederation of democracies; of the Messianic age; of the predictions of the prophets; of the beating of swords into plowshares; of the time when each was to sit under his own vine and fig tree, with no one to make him afraid? And the struggle is eternal”—Lubin’s arms flew out; his voice roared in one of his alarming explosions of internal energy—“eternal; or until the Kingdom is here on earth as it is in heaven!”

## CHAPTER XVI

### OFF SORRENTO

SORRENTO, September 21st.

THERE'S no use in trying to guide the conversation of this man Lubin; it blows uncontrolled. He is riding a special benevolent hobby in these days, and, though it absorbs most of his energies, it does not always govern his thought. So, though he had dwelt for half-hour passages upon his plan for a national system of agricultural chambers of commerce in America, he never got down to a full discussion of the subject until yesterday afternoon, out on Naples Bay.

Sometime in the middle of the day the sirocco, that enervating, sticky heat wind, had stopped blowing, and the late afternoon came off cool and pleasant. We had taken a little lateen-rigged sail boat, commanded by Luigi, a skipper who can sail round a ten-cent piece, and tacked out on a dying breeze to the point where Capri raised her double crest from the mists on one bow, and the grottoes on the other make black slashes in the brown cliffs. And here Lubin fell to talking of his hobby, whose expression in America is the Sheppard Bill, now before Congress. How much of a ripple that bill has caused at home I do not know. Very seldom

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do I see an American newspaper or periodical in these wandering, homesick days.

Lubin reached into his pocket for a pencil, found none, and drew out a cigar instead. Balancing that across one finger, he began to talk.

“Do you know the foundation for Alexander Hamilton’s idea of protection?” he asked. “Well, it’s a governing principle, as good now as it was then. There’s the city”—he indicated the pointed end of the cigar—“and there, at the other end, is the country. They’re opposite poles. They always have been and they always will be. The city means progress. The country means stability. A peasant nation, like some of the Balkan kingdoms, is stable; but not progressive. Things are in danger of going so”—he pulled the cigar by its blunt end until it tilted and fell.

“No progress. Other peoples go ahead. They don’t. Fill up the cities, strengthen them, at the expense of the country, and things go the other way. You have progress—mad progress, without stability. Like this”—he pulled the pointed end of the cigar until the state, thus illustrated, fell.

“So Hamilton fought for the protective tariff when we were just a peasant nation, in order to build up industrial cities and make a balance. But now the balance has swung the other way. Have you watched the statistics on agricultural ownership? Well, the last census showed that thirty-five per cent. of the American farmers were



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tenants. That meant, really, that thirty-five per cent. of them were working for some fellow in the city. Things have gone fast since the last census. From the most reliable information I can get, it's about fifty-fifty now. The city is getting ready to own the country. When that happens"—he picked up the cigar again, balanced it, let it fall—"we go! Of course, when it comes to a financial transaction, the average farmer simply isn't in it with the city man. The city man doesn't have to be told how to market the set of harness or the suit of clothes he has made. He gets that in the very atmosphere he breathes. Any city man can do a farmer in a business transaction. Doing the farmer is his pet sport.

"Now look at Germany. She had to face that problem and another one too. Twenty or thirty years ago the bosses of Germany began to notice that socialism was getting a terrible hold. They said among themselves: 'They say they're after capitalism; but capitalism means us. If this thing keeps up, we go!' Germany is a scientific autocracy; and for that reason it is the most dangerous autocracy the world ever saw. It's the beast, educated and made intelligent—and, therefore, a worse beast than ever. So they said: 'We'll take the wind out of this socialism. We'll steal its thunder.' What they cared for was political control—autocracy. They could afford to make an economic democracy if they only kept political autocracy. That looks all right to modern

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Germans. I don't need to tell you the flaw, I suppose."

He had no need to tell me, who had been over here for three years, observing the thought of Germany as made visible through her works. Before the war people used to say, carelessly, that all this noise about politics was foolishness; that it made little difference by what system a country was governed so long as business kept running and people were reasonably prosperous. We know better now. The fruits of a bad political system in Germany have been nine million dead, twelve million cripples, and the destruction of happiness for an entire world!

"But there's no reason why a free people shouldn't copy the best of her economic machinery, is there?" pursued Lubin. "The foundation of life is food and the foundation of civilization is the farmer. They must keep the farming class strong, as a balance to the city. So they started"—here Lubin paused and smiled—"the *Landwirtschaftsrat*. There! I was a long time learning that word and I have to set my face every time I say it. They chartered a system of agricultural chambers of commerce, or unions, or whatever you want to call them, all over the empire. There was a little chamber in each farming community, which was under a central body in each district. The district bodies were under a larger central body in each kingdom, and the whole thing ran up to a governing body for the empire.

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“Every one of these bodies, from the smallest to the greatest, had a paid professional secretary, a specialist on agricultural conditions, market conditions—everything the farmer should know. The city man could not do the farmer any more, because the farmer, unless he was a natural fool, consulted his local secretary, who had accurate knowledge on almost everything a farmer wanted to know; and if he hadn’t, he passed the question upstairs until he got his answer. The middleman began to knuckle down. And the farmer kept his hand. Everywhere else the percentage of owning farmers—peasant proprietors they call them over here—went down, down; even in France. With us, it’s now about fifty-fifty. But the German percentage is still away up in the eighties.

“The farmer vote!” Lubin proceeded, making one of his quick shifts of attack on the subject in hand. “The farmer vote! We haven’t any farmer vote. It’s a political myth. The farmer doesn’t really know what he wants—he only knows that things are wrong and ought to be remedied. But the farmer vote in Germany counts, because the—that organization—don’t make me pronounce it again—has found out for him and instructed him.

“They call the Reichstag a debating club. It is and it isn’t. Politically it is. It can do nothing to prevent a declaration of war by the governing aristocracy, or to make peace, or to decide by whom the nation shall be governed; but the policy



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of that dangerous scientific autocracy has been to allow economic liberty. So the Reichstag can make laws for the economic government of the country. Now when they came to a law affecting agriculture they have to submit it, before passage, to the *Landwirtschaftsrat*."

"Can the *Landwirtschaftsrat* veto it then?" I asked in my ignorance.

"Oh, no! It doesn't need the power of veto. What it does hold over the Reichstag is a political terror. If it disapproves of the law, and says so, the Reichstag knows that any member who voted for the bill has got himself in bad with the farmers and will lose the solid farmer vote at the next election; for they hang together because they know what they want and the best means to get it. And they know because their expert secretaries, all the way up the line, have been studying the situation and informing them.

"We have the Grange. It has done something. It has accustomed farmers to organization, for one thing. But you probably know what a Grange meeting is like. Brother Smith gets the attention of the chair: 'Mr. Chairman, I wish to make a few remarks about the money devil in Wall Street.' Brother Smith is all right. The money devil is there. But the Grange can't fight the money devil, because it doesn't know how and it hasn't the machinery. The Grange is unofficial, for one thing. Nothing prevents rival organizations, which scatter the efforts of the farmers; in fact,

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there are such rival organizations now. Its secretaries, as a rule, are not experts. Theirs is more a social job than a business one.

“Our organization, like the German, ought to be semi-official. It should be chartered by the Government. That is because only one organization at a time can work in this field—it must be exclusive or it’s nothing.

“What if Hoover, when he took hold of the food situation, had possessed such an organization as this? He could have learned in a week the sentiments and needs of the farmers; he could have passed advice straight down to every farmer in the land—he could have had them mobilized before he began. He can do it yet if Congress will pass that bill.”

“Never change horses while crossing a stream,” I objected.

“Unless the old nag under you is giving out,” replied Lubin. “As a matter of fact, the French have done that very thing. Back last year they organized the peasant farmers on the German model. And right now France is in better shape for native food than any other nation on this side. Without her farmers’ organization, Germany could never have held out. The machine was ready from the first month of the war. She has made mistakes in food control; but the fault was with a few politicians who did not know how to use the machine, not with the machine itself. That has worked perfectly.

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“Will the farmers see it, even if Congress does? I don't know. Some one will have to educate them and organize them, of course. I suggest that as a career for some young man. We're all at heart terribly suspicious of the new thing. There was Arkwright, who learned how to knit by machinery. His fellow workmen smashed his machine. They thought they did it because it threw them out of work. They did it, really, because it was new.

“When I was a boy in the West the Digger Indian women were troubled with insects in their hair. So they used to mix in a kettle a fine mess of adobe mud. They'd plaster their hair with that and then sit in the sun until the whole mess made a regular brick helmet. After three or four days they'd go down to a stream and wash out their hair. Yes; it got rid of the insects. But they could have done it in a quarter of an hour with a comb and a little medicine. However, if you'd have shown them the comb and medicine and tried to explain, they'd have thrown you out of the tepee.”

Luigi, the skipper, brought the boat round on a sudden tack, and skimmed the entrance of Queen Joanna's Bath so narrowly that I could have reached out and picked a bunch of red lichen from the rocks. The rest of the party was peering outward for a glimpse through the entrance into that fairy grotto, the ruined plaything of some luxurious lady whose very bones were now dust. But



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Lubin, as I saw when I looked back, was still gazing out to sea.

“It’s an awful job—changing this world—isn’t it?” he said.

NAPLES, September 24th.

The landlord of the hotel at Amalfi, where, the day before yesterday, we broke our journey for luncheon, is an old gentleman, wearing the side whiskers of a past era, between which gleams an expression of geniality set thereon by fifty years in the hotel business. When he welcomed me I thought he spoke good English. Only when I tried for deeper acquaintance did I learn that he knew merely a few stock business phrases—like “Do you wish a room, sir?” or “Luncheon will be served at one”—which he spoke with that trick of accent common to his race. Whereupon I took to French, which he spoke fluently.

Amalfi hangs on a cleft along the Tyrrhenian shore. Were I writing a mere account of travel I should stop here, with page after page about its startling beauty. There is a short but broad strip of fine beach, and in the old years it was a resort where strangers came in winter, and natives, driven out by the baking heat of interior Italy, in summer. The winter season is no more, as the landlord informed me when we shifted gears to French; but some Italian families came this summer. A few bathers, braving the midday heat, were even then swimming in the blue water below.

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He seemed so glad to see strangers, after all this dreary time, that he followed us about, talking. He was joined presently by a sixteen-year-old granddaughter, with the dark pagan beauty so common in Southern Italy, and a little hunch-backed grandson.

We fascinated the girl—we beings from the outside. The very situation of Amalfi, shut up in a cleft between mountain and sea, and the very strangeness of its architecture, make it appear a world apart, as though it belonged to another planet. It had been more than two years, we realized, since she had seen many strangers; and two years is a long time when one is sixteen. She could speak no language we knew; but her great soft eyes were always on us, interested and wistful.

So, when luncheon was done, we joined the family at coffee in the parlor of the inn, a room decorated with high-colored Italian gewgaws, with models of ships, and with signed photographs of honored guests. Among them I picked out Longfellow, with his familiar signature. Yes, that was true, said the host; Longfellow had visited this house, and had written a poem about it. Behold the poem! He produced a leaflet, printed, with many a typographical error, in English.

Many other eminent persons had visited his house. He rattled off the list and came out with a fine climax on the name of Garibaldi. Yes; Garibaldi! He came in the sixties, on a secret mission.

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“And my father, who was a patriot, knew; but kept the secret. I saw him sitting where you are now—our Garibaldi! I was only a boy then, and my father kept this house.”

Gazing from picture to picture, I came at last to the photograph of a stout young Italian in a cook's apron and cap, standing amid the papier-mâché glories of cheap country photography. Framed beside it was a letter in German, the paper bearing a coronet.

“My son,” he said. “Ah, he was a cook! Listen! That is a letter from a prince. He came here. I said to my son: ‘It is a prince; do your best!’ His dinner that night was a true creation. The prince sent for him. ‘You must go to Germany to be my head cook,’ he said. My son went. But after six months he came back. He did not like Germany. *Voilà!* His letter from the prince.

“You do not read German? ‘The best cook I ever had—an artist!’ it says. There is his other picture.”

Above the mantelpiece hung an enlarged crayon portrait. As I turned back I saw that the eyes of the girl had brimmed over with tears.

“Dead two months. Before Monte Santo,” said the father. “He was cited. They sent me his decorations.”

“He was your only son?” I asked.

My host shook his head.

“I had six—all in the army. One”—here he



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smiled a little with pride—"has been wounded twice, and is a captain now. He"—my host indicated the crayon portrait—"left five children; they are with me. He would have taken my place here, as I took my father's; for he was such a cook, monsieur—such a superb cook!"

While Antonio, the driver, waited for the cool of the day before bringing out his horses, pretty well spent by the work of an unexpectedly hot morning, we braved the direct-beating heat of mid-day, to see the town. Only dogs and foreigners, the Italians say, walk in the sun. However, on the first street we were joined by an eight-year-old girl, blond of hair, as these Southern Italians often are, but brown of eye. She attached herself to our persons and never left us until she waved us good-by at four o'clock.

I regret to say that at first I took her for a beggar; but when I offered her a sou she simply put the back of her hand against her mouth and shook her head. At the cathedral she was always underfoot of the verger; she skipped ahead of us, like a sprite, down every street. She, too, I think, was taken with the fascination of the unknown world. Who knows that we did not start an impulse which, ten years from now, shall draw a girl immigrant through Ellis Island?

You cannot go far in Southern Italy without running against traces of American influence; and the contrast is always odd, since this region is

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unimaginably different from our world of bright hard airs, wooden houses, steel construction, sanitary plumbing and efficiency. We were going over the cathedral, our faithful little henchwoman trotting after us, a finger in her mouth; and the verger led us into the vestry, a room venerable with age when Columbus sailed. There, like a Puritan in a group of Neapolitan fishermen, among the embossed silver candlesticks, the heavy embroidered vestments, the venerable sacred paintings, stood, stark and stiff, a regular eighteenth-century New England Chippendale-pattern grandfather's clock! An inscription on one side stated that it had been presented to the church by the natives of Amalfi resident in New Haven, Connecticut, Stati-Uniti. Framed on the other side, in one large group picture, were the photographs of the donors—in American clothes, with their front hair all carefully cowlicked!

Antonio, the driver, sprightly, gray-haired, conversational, was himself a trace of America in Italy. I noticed when we started that he spoke a little English; and presently I found another item of peculiarity. Your Latin loves small animals, like dogs and cats, as witness the tenderly cherished trench dogs which are the soldier's consolation along the Great Line. To them they are kind. If they seem unkind to horses, it is not the unkindness of cruelty, I think, but simply of incomprehension. The horse nature somehow fails to dovetail with Latin nature. "The Latin," said a

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British cavalryman to me, "is naturally a poor horse master."

But it delighted the soul of a horseman to see Antonio care for his team all through that hot drive. He carefully accommodated their pace to the hills. Before watering them he took out their bits, cleaned their nostrils and their slathered lips with a sponge which he carried under the seat, rested them a bit, and, his fingers on that horse thermometer under the crotch of the foreleg, saw that they did not drink too much. Before starting he wiped down their slathered sides with a bit of sacking or a wisp of grass, and made sure that the harness did not rub.

It was no surprise, then, when, during a stop for watering, Antonio suddenly volunteered:

"I spik English good one time, *mais* I become bad because I no talk. I learn him in Hoboken, New Jersey."

He volunteered further—speaking a patois of English, French and Italian—that he learned the livery business there, and practiced his trade for a time in New York before returning to Italy and setting up in business for himself.

"I no like New York," he added. "People all right—yes. Winter—snow—*effroyable!*" And Antonio blew on his fingers and gave a series of realistic shivers very refreshing on that blistering day. The rest of his remarks had to do with business. It was hard to keep livestock in condition at current prices. He took down a nose



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bag from under the seat, and showed a mixture of bran and coarse beans—supper for his team. It cost four times what good corn used to cost, he said—“And regard it!”

We pulled along that Sorrento-Amalfi cliff drive, double-starred in the guidebooks as the most beautiful road in the world, until we came out above Positano, situated, like Amalfi, in a cleft, but even more picturesque. Here Antonio grew communicative again. “Few men here,” he said. “They go to America when they get old enough; the rest go to the war.”

Indeed, as we drove through the upper fringes of the town we saw, by way of men, only two or three old fellows, bent of back and rheumy of eye. At all the doorways sat groups of women, sewing or resting—young women, with the startling pagan beauty that is the common endowment of all Southern Italy; old women—beautiful themselves, after their fashion, under the wrinkles. About them played innumerable brown children in few clothes or none at all. In the patches of festooned vineyards which interspersed the houses, girls, coifed with red handkerchiefs, were gathering the grapes and carrying them away in huge baskets balanced on their heads. The only young and stalwart man in sight was the sentinel who, with a click and a flourish, stopped us at the corporate limit of the town.

Below lay the domelike roofs of this city of stucco and cement, the long white lines of houses

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broken by the dark green of luxurious semitropical vegetation. Across the valley, on garden patches a little apart from the town, stood two half-built houses, already roofed, but with their walls gaping between the beams. Antonio indicated them with his whip.

“American houses,” he said, and laughed. I thought this merely one of Antonio’s little pleasantries until to-day, when I mentioned his remark to a man who knows Italy. I find that the American house is an institution in these parts. A peasant from Southern Italy emigrates to America and finds work at railroad construction or harvesting. He stays four or five years and saves his money. When, some November, he takes steerage passage home for his first vacation, he invests his savings in a patch of land close by his native town. He returns, and is cleared at Ellis Island during the early spring rush of immigration. In four or five years more, if he be ordinarily lucky, he returns for the winter, in order to start his house. It remains half built for another working period. Finally he comes back with the money to complete it. Then, if he follows the ordinary course, he settles down to live in his native town as a house-holder and a traveled person of consequence.

In some of the old conservative South-Italian towns these American houses are the only new construction for one or two centuries. Occasionally the new peasant proprietor observes and in-

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troduces an American wrinkle. For instance, in a little village down by Salerno dwelt an Italian who in America became a plumber's assistant. He brought back with him and installed in his house an American bathroom. Tourists came miles and miles to see that town for its Roman ruins. The natives came miles and miles to see Giuseppe's bathtub!

Southern Italy, if one may judge by the Sorrento-Amalfi peninsula and the region about Naples, takes the war with the resignation of an old people which has lived through such troubles many and many a time before. No flags fly in its towns, and yet one sees no symbols of grief. Life, except for the absence of men and a general deadening of all activity, seems to go its attractive, loose, smiling pace as before the war. It is not at all like Lombardy and Piedmont at the north, where one feels the nervous stress of war. Yet the southern peasant has fought magnificently at the Front. "It has been a peasants' war, really," said an Italian staff officer. Within these white stucco houses hang many and many a soldier photograph of the boys who will not return—like the one I saw at Amalfi. But in the doorways the women still gesticulate with emotional sociability over their work and smile a pleasant welcome to the stranger on the road.

The landscape now is beaten hard and brown; it resembles California just before the autumn rains begin. Not for a generation, I suppose, has



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Southern Italy been so dry. Here and there Antonio pointed out the bare bottoms of streams that always before, in his memory, had run bank full. The weather last spring and summer played us all a villainous trick. It has been many years since grain crops fell so far below the average. Lack of fertilizer and of labor accounted for something; a mistake of the food control—all European food controllers made their initial mistakes—accounted for still more. But the drought was the main trouble. America must supply a deficiency of millions of quintals.

This is all the more necessary because the Italians are and always have been a bread-eating people. Julius Cæsar's unconquerable legions of Italian peasants lived and conquered the world on wheat and barley bread, eating meat only occasionally, when a raid on the barbarians threw cattle into their hands. For the fatty element necessary to human nutriment they relied mostly on oil—the olive oil of Italy and Southern Gaul. That characteristic has persisted. Your Italian of common occupation can live from year's end to year's end on bread and oil.

It is a mistake to suppose that macaroni is, for the average Italian, a regular, necessary dish. Macaroni is a luxury of the rich and well-to-do—a pleasant though expensive way of dishing up breadstuffs. The Italian peasant is more likely to take his bread in the form of *polenta*—corn-meal mush kept long in the pot, and cut out and

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warmed over as needed. To no people of the world is bread so much the staff of life.

Just now, when in the natural course of things Italy is depending a great deal on fruit and fresh vegetables—perishable commodities—the food situation appears a little spotted; some districts are doing better than others. In general the country seems to eat sparingly but sufficiently. Let me begin with my own hotel and restaurant experiences, admitting in the beginning that hotels and restaurants are only an imperfect guide to the general conditions of any country.

Restaurant prices generally have gone up from seventy-five to one hundred per cent. You can get no butter, and there is far less oil in Italian cookery than formerly. With breakfast or tea you get a little measured teaspoonful of government sugar—the real stuff mixed with saccharin. This mixture tends to leave a greasy aftertaste in the mouth. You find beside your plate one chunk of war bread about as big as a man's fist. That is all you get unless you specially ask the waiter for more—and pay for it.

As a matter of fact, one grows accustomed to the rhythm of war rations, and I have never asked for more; nor, I notice, have any of my dinner companions. You are allowed only two main dishes—as macaroni, fish or meat; desserts and soups do not count. The portions, however, are ample; I do not rise from the meal hungry. For dessert I have had nothing but fruit since I entered

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Italy. One does miss sweets; at least, an American does, for we are great sugar eaters.

The human race worried along without sugar until two centuries ago, getting the saccharine element from fruit and a little honey. The taste for sugar is, in one sense, an unnatural one; the starchy elements in grains and vegetables, supplemented by animal or vegetable fats, are enough for human nutrition. When one grows really ravenous for sugar he can buy candy—chocolates are about one dollar and fifty cents a pound with the inferior grades of candy correspondingly cheaper. These confections are supposed, at least, to be made from honey. However, filling up on candy is not considered exactly a classy thing to do—one's conscience develops new and troublesome ethics in a world war. Buying candy when sugar is short seems like cheating. Myself, I have fallen only once in nearly a month.

ITALIAN CORRESPONDENTS' HEADQUARTERS,  
October 18, 1917.

The Italian Army, last to admit foreign correspondents to its lines, has now perhaps the most smoothly working press system of all. It seemed to me that I had scarcely arrived at the beginning of my ten days' permission to the Front before I was installed in a fast motor, with an escorting officer and two others of my kind, and was running at breakneck speed for a visit to the Bainsizza Plateau, and—if fortune and the course of battle



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avored—to the Italian positions about Monte San Gabriele. This was the territory captured by the Italians in their last gigantic effort of August, the greatest single victory won on the Fronts of the Western Allies since the Battle of the Marne.

To-night, as I sit scratching off these notes on the rickety table of a very dark little hotel room, I am in a state of embarrassment common to all who try to write about the war. I have seen enough to-day, as one does every day at the Front, to write whole volumes. It is hard to express it all in a few hundred words. The psychology of war is a kind of intoxication, a huge intensification of life. Some of its moments produce on the mind and the senses an effect more poignant and permanent than those of years of peace.

My impressions may edit themselves in time, retaining only the really significant scenes and incidents; but to-night I am mainly struck with my memories of war revisited; for a year ago last April I saw the hinterland of this country at a time when it was still a field of desperate and continual battle. And to-day I was struck especially with its grotesque and queer transformations.

First, there was a little town, still unscarred by shells at that period, where we passed the night last year before trying to get into the house at Zagora. It was headquarters then, and a general in command of artillery had been kind enough to give us a bed. He warned us at the time that we might be wakened by a

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“whizbang”; for, though the town had not been shelled as yet, we were within easy range of the enemy guns, and military works on one side had been suffering of late. As for the town, it was a little hill village, like a thousand others in Northern Italy, and yet with its own individuality. Its three or four narrow streets centered about an old Renaissance church and a tall slender campanile. On the little public square stood an old four-pillared shrine of some pagan god, an inheritance from Roman times, now reduced to the condition of a capstone for the drinking fountain. On one border of the village was a wide and pleasant château, its outer walls gayly decorated, Venetian fashion, with flowery wreaths and cupids.

The town, at first sight, seemed to stand as I remembered it, intact, untouched. Only after several minutes did I begin to perceive the new stone. Everywhere, in the gray spaces of walls that had been white when the builders worked on them, centuries ago, there was the gleam of white patchwork. The painted château proved best of all what had happened. The great irregular patches of white crossed the running decoration of flowers and cupids, and broke it. There had been time and spare energy for rebuilding, but none for decoration.

This town, in short, had been clear through the cycle of war. Intact when I saw it in April, 1916, it had been heavily bombarded afterward and had half crumbled under the shells. In May and again

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in August, 1917, the Italians swept on across the ranges dominating the town and relieved it from artillery fire. The canny home-loving Italian natives—Italian still, though for centuries the town had been under Austrian dominion—had immediately set about rebuilding, with the help of soldiers quartered upon them. Conservative to their finger tips, they had rebuilt exactly and mathematically on the old lines. As we swept on toward one of the toughest and most cruel aspects of this war, it seemed to me that I had been touched by a little breath of the coming peace.

So we motored on over a wooded range, rusty with the dull browns and yellows that October brings to Europe; they do not know, in these lands, any violent autumn tints like ours. I had seen this range last in its tender spring dress; but it had undergone a greater transformation than that. Where it had been before an untrodden wood, it was now a world of intense military activity, and of rude temporary buildings. Everywhere, too, it was creased with new military roads—those wonderful roads at which the Italian engineers are so clever.

Here I must touch briefly on geography. We were going north of the key town of Gorizia, into the foothills of the Alps. They are called foothills, but in the East of the United States they would be called mountains; they are fully as high as the Catskills or as Mount Tamalpais, which hangs over San Francisco. On the other side of



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Gorizia, stretching to the sea, lies the hill desert of the Carso—a red, barren soil, in which nothing grows except a few stunted scrubs. That unpromising soil is spotted everywhere with great outcroppings of rock, red or white, and studded with *dolinas*, which are regular flat-bottomed holes, like the craters of the moon.

The Carso is supposed to end at the fertile valley in which stands the troubled city of Gorizia. As a matter of fact, when, on the other side of this town, the terrain sweeps up into the Alpine foothills, this barren formation persists. In places the lower Julian Alps are sweet with chestnut woods and underbrush; but the plateaus and many of the slopes partake of the character of the Carso.

We crossed the summits of the nearest range; we were looking, from a height of perhaps two thousand feet, on to the gorge of the Isonzo. When I saw it before, in the early spring of 1916, the river was of a clear opalesque blue, in spite of the early rains. Now it rolled muddy and opaque, like one of our Western rivers when the placer diggers have been at work. Indeed, the landscape was transformed since the time when the lines rested at Zagora, low down on that slope, and when Plava, on the other side of the river, was the opening to the communication trenches. In those days the grotesque scars of war showed only on the slope below Zagora, in a maze of yellow ditches and walls and back trenches.

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Now the whole landscape was so scarred. New roads ran everywhere. They were alive that morning with transports crawling through a light, cold autumn rain. Everywhere—not going too closely into details—hut settlements, banked with yellow earth or with sandbags, broke the green of the hills. The forest had disappeared in great bold patches. Piled everywhere were military materials. It looked not like war—except for the uniforms—but like the preliminaries to such a great engineering job as the Panama Canal or the Assuan Dam. And, indeed, it looks what it is. The Italian campaign in the mountains is the greatest engineering job ever undertaken by man.

When I visited this field before I came to see the famous house at Zagora, a military position long unique on any Front. For at Zagora, on the first abrupt slope of Monte Cucco, the lines locked after the stubborn battle of November, 1915. The Italians had crossed the Isonzo at this point and were trying to force their way up Monte Cucco.

In a stone farmhouse on the outskirts of the village they were definitely checked. As things settled down, the Italians found themselves literally in the back rooms of the house, the Austrians in the front rooms; the Italians in the kitchen, the Austrians in the coal cellar; the Italians in the spare back bedroom, the Austrians in the dining-room. On that spring morning last year we sneaked in at dawn for the chance to put our hands on a wall only a foot away from the enemy,

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and to crawl down a trench line where, through the loopholes, you could see the walls of the enemy trenches rising in your face only ten yards away.

That morning, too, we were caught under a bombardment for our pains, and forced to stay nearly all day. The situation had rested so for nearly six months when I visited the famous house; it seemed incredible that it should exist much longer. As a matter of fact, it did exist for thirteen months more—until the attack of last May, which outflanked and took the Austrian positions on Monte Cucco and forced the enemy back over the mountain. For a year and a half men crawled and whispered through the broken walls of that house, chucking or dodging grenades, engaged simply in the business of killing. It was never shelled; neither side could do that without the risk of killing its own men. But it crumbled under the constant vicious little explosions of the grenades, until in the day of Italian victory it stood as it does now—a foundation with two fragments of saw-edged windowless wall rising brown against the hillside. The rains have washed away the stains of battle; when I saw it last it was black with burned powder.

I could not quite understand, then, why neither side blew up this house or attacked to relieve the position. I understood to-day, having a chance to look about. The house—two stories on one side and three on the other—occupied an abrupt hill



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slope. But on the Austrian side a flat little piece of hill plateau formed its front yard and kitchen garden. Had the Italians broken through into that field, they would have been slaughtered like lambs by the Austrian machine guns bristling from the reserve lines. On the other hand, had the Austrians broken through they would have come out on the abrupt hill slope controlled by hundreds of machine guns from the Italian positions on the mountains across the river. Only a great general attack, like the one that came last May, could ever have relieved it. There it stands, still unrepaired, a monument of an episode unique in the history of wars.

We crossed the river at Plava, where still stood the wrecks of pontoons by which we crossed before—there is a real bridge now. To Canale we traveled for three miles literally over the old Austrian front-line positions, for in all the early stages of the war—in fact, until the great surprise attack of August—the river itself had been No Man's Land; the trenches of either side ran level with its banks. Much had been talked in Europe about the rush of tourists, after this war, to witness the trench lines of the battlefields. As a matter of fact, there will be little to see. A trench is only a deep ditch; it takes constant work to maintain it against the attrition of Nature. Everywhere these ditches, even where they had been wattled with willow branches, were filling up or falling in. Grass was springing on their para-

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pets and late autumn flowers were blooming. A road, bordered regularly with trees, had evidently run on this side of the river bank. These trees had been scarred, stripped of their branches and broken here and there by two years of constant firing.

Yet with the autumn rains their foliage had freshened before its fall; they looked no more ragged than thousands of trees clipped for firewood which one sees along the European roads in peacetime. I observed the same thing in the old trenches near Soissons, abandoned by the Germans early last spring. Nature will not be denied; and except for places like the Somme Battlefield, where the soil has been chemically transformed by the constant shell explosions, she is fast healing the wounds of the earth.

Canale, which must have been a beautiful river town before it became a point of support in a trench line, looked so much like all those war-battered towns, which every one has seen in the cinema, that I shall not stop to describe it. From Canale, Cadorna began last August the first movement of his surprising attack, which relieved all the mountains above us and took the Bainsizza Plateau.

And now we were climbing on a perfect road, metaled and graded at its innumerable hairpin turns, which we could see winding above us to the mountain summit. The Twelve-Day Road, the Italians call it; though for most of the distance

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it had to be blasted out of the hard Alpine sandstone and gneiss, the job took exactly twelve days from the arrival of the working parties to its perfect completion. So we climbed, the guns, which we had been hearing all the morning, growing more and more distinct—climbed until we shot about the corner of a cliff and came out in sight of the Bainsizza Plateau.

What a terrain! For monotonous barrenness it resembled the Carso. It rolled away, a monochrome of reddish brown, rumped here and there by little ranges of hills. Even the foliage of the few desert shrubs, touched with autumn, had taken on the prevailing color. Only the white rocks broke the monotony. These rose in ridges and patches, making the landscape appear as though snow had fallen and was half melted. We shot into sight of a hill village, half destroyed like the rest. Across the road lay a field where soil had settled into a hollow of the rocks; there stood rows of cornstalks stripped of their ears.

“The Austrians did not destroy that crop!” I remarked. “Why?”

“We came on too fast,” said our escorting captain. “It was a surprise, you know. We were streaming over this part of the plateau before they knew we had started. The women and children took to the hills. We rounded them up afterward and sent four hundred of them back to the safety zone. For days after the attack small knots of Austrians were wandering round the plateau or



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the forest, trying to find a chance to give themselves up.”

This was the last sign of permanent human habitation; the rest were dugouts or huts wedged in between rocks and sandbagged. But always the roads were perfect. We came, in the end, to the rear of a low hill range that closes the plateau on the Austrian side. Beyond this range, half or three-quarters of a mile away, lay our trenches. Guns were going behind us; sometimes, if you were watching, you could see just after an explosion a slight puff of mist overlying a clump of rocks, but of the gun you could see nothing, so cleverly was it camouflaged.

We pulled up finally before the dugouts of an advanced dressing station to talk things over with a fine, stalwart Milanese surgeon in charge. The night before had brought an adventure, he said. He was operating on an emergency case in that board-and-corrugated-iron building there, when the Austrians began shelling them with shrapnel. He pointed out the little ragged holes in the roof where the bullets had pattered about him as he clipped and tied. It was a case of life and death; so he had kept right on. In the morning the wounded man had gone back by ambulance. “And, except for complications, he will get well too!” said the surgeon. “But they won’t get me to-night, for we have just finished our little playhouse over there.” He led us to the gaping mouth of the tunnel in the rock. We pushed on

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for forty or fifty feet to a chamber where the tunnel widened. We were in an operating room, complete even to the X-ray apparatus! And as we emerged we saw we had another case. Down the road came four soldiers with the Red Cross brassard on their arms. Shoulder-high they carried a stretcher made from interwoven willow branches. From a heap of gray blankets peered the face of the wounded man; he looked, as the wounded generally do, not especially agonized, but just dazed and a little uncomfortable.

We ran our machine into the protection of a hill after that, and made a basket luncheon. Our trenches were on the other slope of the hill, half a mile or so away, and now and then a shell from our guns or the enemy's whistled overhead. And we chatted of things personal, including the failings of absent fellow men; but scarcely a word about the war.

We had to make a quick run past a dangerous corner as we came away; on this point the Austrians, who must have suspected the presence of a road, could bring fire to bear from two directions at once. We had scarcely passed it, in fact, before the slight, dull, yet sinister, sound of a shrapnel burst caused us to crane our necks and observe, a hundred feet back, a pretty smoke cloud trailing down toward earth. Now we were skirting a hill; the full glory of the Isonzo Gorge showed below us; but I shall omit description until

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I come to the point where, having abandoned the machine and taken to our legs, we found ourselves on the ruined crest of Monte Santo.

It is called a mountain; to-night I think of it more as a crag, so steep is it, except for one side, up which, through innumerable military works, we had wormed our machine. On the very summit once stood a convent. You could see that it had been built of stone, because some of the fragments showed that they had been shaped by the quarryman's saw; but you could tell neither its old shape nor its dimensions.

Jeffries, of our party, had visited this summit a short time after the battle, when the slopes were still dotted with the unburied dead. Poking about among the ruin that day, he had discovered a child's toy automobile—a relic, after two years of war, from the days when this ruin harbored nuns and children. Jeffries was poking around again when I was hailed in a perfect cockney accent by a little soldier in very rusty olive-gray and a trench helmet.

“Are you the *Dyly Myle* man?” he asked, his animated Italian expression contrasting queerly with his accent. I indicated Jeffries as the anointed representative of the *Daily Mail*; and the soldier, who, it appeared, was a constant reader, addressed him in terms which brought the blushes to his cheek. He was a performer at the London Hippodrome, the soldier told us—an acrobat. Also he had married an English actress. He



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dived into the depths of his battered uniform, and brought out her photograph in a frame, to prove his assertion that she was a beauty. Having, it appeared, nothing special to do at the moment, he joined the party and was with us most of the way over Monte Santo.

Yes, the visible dead were buried; but there were other dead still there, as the sense of smell told from time to time. For the earth below us was a honeycomb of caverns, where Italian and Austrian lay festering side by side. It was these caverns, more than the nature of the hill itself, which made the taking of Monte Santo so difficult. Two companies of Italian Arditi stormed that crest in the beginning; they had secured it to all appearance; they had even sent back prisoners, when—they vanished, and the Austrians were back. The enemy had simply disappeared into the caverns, popped out at the proper moments, and made captives of their captors. It took wave after wave of assault troops to secure that summit and to make the caverns untenable.

Then a peep through a camouflage screen—a view that told us what this position was all about. On our right, far below, ran the Isonzo. Across, a twin height to ours was Monte Sabotino. Monte Santo, as we approached it, had shown yellow-brown; the hot breath of battle had stripped it of trees and of most small vegetation. But Sabotino had been taken more than a year before, and a green-brown autumn forest still clothed it. Its

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precipitous sides were banging, banging, banging with concealed heavy artillery.

Before us, less than a mile away, was a perfectly bald cone-shaped mountain, only one ragged dead tree near the summit showing that it had once been clothed with a forest. That was San Gabriele, now the chief obstacle to Italian advance in this region. Honeycombed with caverns, as Monte Santo was, the summit where the dead tree stands sentinel is a No Man's Land. Neither side has been able to hold it. The opposing trenches run together up its slopes, widen out to curve round each side of the summit, and come together on the other side.

On the right ran that gracious valley, now overlaid with golden mist, where stands Gorizia. Gorizia looked white, beautiful and inviting; distance had blotted out her ugly stains of war. Before the city, and hiding a little the farther view of the valley, lay a cluster of tawny barren hills. That is the range of San Marco, held by the Austrians. Take it, and the Italians have an open pass into Austria. But San Gabriele commands San Marco; hence the struggle which has been going on since August about that barren cone crowned by its one dead tree. Farther on stretched the whole red range of the Carso; and finally, a glint in the Nile-green mists of that misty afternoon, the Adriatic, right wing of the great European battle line. On the Italian Front alone can one see the whole scheme of battle.

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I realized that fact again a few minutes later. We had crawled behind a camouflage screen about the more precipitous slope of the mountain, for a nearer look at our own front trenches and the Austrian position. Our path took us through a wilderness of military works, not to be described here, past the yawning mouths of the old Austrian caverns, past soldiers on guard with the keenly alert expression of battle—for here it is always a battle, more or less intense. Shrapnel was breaking all the time along the mountain slope below us; now and then, through the screen, you could observe the yellow puff of a premature burst. The soldiers told us, reassuringly, that it was only a matter of time before the Austrians raised their range to sweep our present position. We came at last to a dugout, where an officer, who looked, in his knit and wound winter cap, like an especially handsome Sikh of Northern India, led us to a peeping place.

We were above a bowl-like plateau in the hills—so far and directly above it that I felt I could have thrown a baseball onto the roofs of the town below. It was a little, huddled, stone hill-town, not especially battered, but deserted. The plateau behind it was threaded with roads. Before us loomed San Gabriele, the double trench line, yellow amid the brown, trailing down it to the slopes of a little valley, where it was lost from sight. The landscape looked barren, deserted, lunar, and nothing more; of the thousands and



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thousands of men who inhabited those hills and that plateau, there was not a glimpse.

Then things began to happen which showed that this was not a desert, but a battlefield. Here and there an electric spark twinkled an instant before the vision—the flash of a gun. Along one of the roads black puffs began rhythmically to burst and settle. We were trying to trace the Austrian trench line, at a spot where it seemed obscure, when it was outlined for by one—two—three—four bursts of white smoke, shot with black—the Italians were shelling. Monte Sabotino was shooting harder than ever; three-inch field guns, with their vicious little snap, opened from some point below us; the spitting hum of a mitrailleuse joined in.

The day was getting so warm that it was prudent to retire, I thought. The captain must have thought so, too, for he started us back. But not before I had my own reunion. A tall, stalwart fellow, in the uniform of a lieutenant of a machine-gun company, hailed me in United States English. "Where do you live?" he asked. "New York—when I'm at home," said I. "So do I," he said; "or did. I was taking a course in Brown's business college when I came over here to this war. Say, who won the World's Series?" Unfortunately I had but imperfect reports on that great sporting event and could only tell him that, at last accounts, it stood two-all.

And then—we missed our Englishman. The

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fourth member of the party, he represented the Foreign Office. He is a man of wit and parts—a novelist, a garden expert, a searcher of this earth for botanical specimens; the war, in fact, called him home from somewhere on the boundaries of Thibet. We had just scurried fast round a corner, where we were a little uncertain of the camouflage, when we noticed that he was not among us. The captain muttered something about wishing they would not loiter in dangerous places. It occurred to us, too, that he might have been picked off by a sniper; so there was nothing to do but go back for him.

We came round a corner of rock and caught sight of him. On the hillside was one of the patches of ground the shells had spared; it grew a few sickly herbs. Reaching up, flat against the hillside, he was digging with a garden trowel, which, I understand, he always carries in his pocket as another man carries a knife. We hailed him, and he faced us, the trowel in one hand and two bulbs in the other.

“Cyclamen!” he exclaimed. “And jolly fine specimens, too!”

“Hurry along, Englishman,” I said, “or you’ll be a bulb and get planted, and have a chance to grow.”

He gazed back over the harassed landscape.

“I haven’t the slightest idea where those shells are going,” he said, “which intensifies the confidence with which I view the situation.”

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So we scrambled and scurried back to that protected spot under the hill where the car waited. I can never conquer that feeling of relief with which I depart from a place like Monte Santo; but my relief is always tempered by shame when I think of the army I am leaving behind to endure it day after day and night after night. It seems a little like running away.

ITALIAN HEADQUARTERS, October 23d.

For three days the Englishman and I, under proper escort of an officer who knows this Front like his own bedroom, and driven in a fast, agile mountain-climbing car, have been ranging the Trentino. There has been no time for taking notes. When, after dark, we rolled into our quarters at Verona, we had just enough energy left to dine and tumble into bed; before daylight we were dressing and off again. Perhaps it is just as well. Through this delay I have got the geographical details all twisted up in my mind and shall not unload them upon the reader a mass of names in a foreign language. Instead, I shall confine myself to general observations and to a few scenes that stand out in the memory of a crowded three days.

One main impression lingers of those three days, almost effacing any others: It is of the mighty, the unprecedented engineering work the Italians have performed in order to take and secure these mountains. I could wish that I had technical



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training as an engineer in order properly to convey what they have done.

First and foremost come the roads. There one is tempted to grow epic. When I was with the army in the Alps about a year and a half ago, getting to most of the peaks—even the lower ones—involving much travel by mule up mere trails, much hard climbing, much disagreeable swinging across gorges by teleferica. Even in the higher Alps the visitor need do little of that work to-day. He goes almost to the summits by perfect mountain roads in a motor car. Last Sunday I went so, from the six-hundred-foot level almost to the six-thousand-foot level, up the slopes of a mountain so precipitous that I grew giddy every time I looked down.

These roads of necessity take the sharpest kind of hairpin turns. They are scientifically banked at the corners; they are metaled; and usually at the most dangerous turns a stone wall or a row of deeply planted stone buttresses guards the inexperienced chauffeur from a tumble with his car into infinity. Hundreds and perhaps thousands of such roads have been driven during the process of securing the Alps. The direction has been in the hands of Italian engineers, mostly from the north; and I know a man high in that profession who has always maintained that the Northern Italian civil engineer is the best in the world.

The labor, for the most part, has been performed by reservists, though civilian workmen, too old for

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military service, are employed here and there; in fact, last Saturday I went up one perfect road which the Italians call the *Chemin des Dames*, or Ladies' Road—a play on the name of the famous position over which the French and the Germans fought so long last summer. The work here was done by stout Italian peasant women; and I hereby assure my suffragette sisters that it is an excellent road.

Indeed, the road-making organization has become so expert that Italy is considering it in her after-the-war plans. The southern part of the peninsula is still suffering from the lack of really good highways. While that condition of affairs exists, it seems a pity to let such an organization go out of existence. Like all the other belligerent countries, Italy will surely have her struggle with unemployment during the period of readjustment. And certain of the great industrial men are suggesting to the government that the organization shall remain intact until it has provided Southern Italy with all the roads she needs.

Concerning the more obviously military part of this great engineering job, I must write with more caution. In places it is startling and incredible. Coming to the abrupt rocky peak of a little mountain, I found myself facing a series of tunnels. A reservist lit a miner's lantern and guided us through a dark rock passage. We came out finally by the breech of a gun. Daylight showed beyond its muzzle. I peeped out. I was looking down the

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face of a cliff; across the sweep of a deeply cleft valley lay the line of the Austrian trenches.

Again we wound up a road toward a summit and came presently to a camouflage screen, showing that we were within range of the enemy fire. In the corner formed by two mountain slopes, so placed that it had good protection, was an electric power house. The Austrian lines, I was told, were only a mile or so across the summit. "That power plant," said our captain, "not only furnishes light for the caverns up there; it sends the compressed air to drive two hundred drills!"

Everywhere, in some places looking like spider web, ran the threads of the telefericas. That device of Italian warfare has been so often described that I need only give a reminder here. A teleferica is an aërial tram—merely a cable on which runs a wire basket, a gigantic version of the cash carrier used in department stores. These shoot from position to position along slopes or across gulfs. In most cases it would take hours to make the same transit by road. The teleferica carries up the emergency supplies, for it works much faster; and everywhere roads and telefericas supplement each other. If one breaks down through accident or enemy fire, the other takes up the job.

Finally, on a trip to one of the highest positions that bar the road down the Asiago Valley, I got an idea of what Italian engineering has done for the



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comfort of the men; how Alpine warfare, from the point of view of the soldiers who must endure it, has become transformed.

This was a six-thousand-foot mountain, and we climbed to it in our motor car by one of the regular new roads. That kind of climbing is not so prosaic as it seems; it has its sporting side. Never have I so sympathized with a chauffeur as with the stout young Italian mechanic who drove us. During almost any straight passage—if you happened to be on the outside seat of the car—you could look down hundreds of feet and speculate on what a skid would do to the car and passengers. There was danger of skidding, too; for it rained most of the way and snowed the rest. But straight stretches of road were few. No sooner were we past one hairpin turn than we ran into another.

In most cases the other leg of the hairpin was quite invisible, and the danger which kept our driver's eyes on the road and his hand firm on the controls was that a camion, making up time, should shoot round the corner at a pace too fast for control. Two or three times we did have such encounters, and the cars seemed to dig their tires into the road as they avoided collision by feet and even inches. On these occasions our chauffeur, skillful though he was, could not make the turns without backing; and usually before he started up he would have the rear wheels within a foot of a thousand-foot slope. At those moments there

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would be just a tiny break in the thread of our conversation while we caught our breath and dug our toes into the soles of our boots. Then we would resume talk with that calm which one always assumes in a state of war.

At last, with the world far below us, we were running on a final stretch of road just below the ridge of this knife-shaped mountain and parallel with it. There we had luncheon with a bronzed and cheerful headquarters' mess. Finally we walked to the summit, which was tunneled and galieried in a manner so thorough and complex that I could not describe it if I tried. But the interesting thing to the Alpini is the fact that these tunnels and galleries furnish them comfortable winter quarters. Once they had to lie out for weeks and sometimes months together in the eternal snows, with no fires—for smoke would have betrayed their position—and no hot food. When I visited the Adamello in April of last year, the thermometer at night always went down to zero; and in the dead of the previous winter it has been forty degrees below. Yet there they were—fighting without fire!

In these tunnels the men are sheltered from the blizzards. Stovepipes can be carried out to some harmless neutral position, where they will not betray the location of the men; consequently if the teleferica is kept working, with its supplies of fuel, they may have both warmth and hot food. True, the front patrol trenches must be held under the

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old conditions; but these, in the nature of this fighting, may be lightly occupied, and the men can be very frequently relieved; so they need endure the old conditions only two or three days at a time.



## CHAPTER XVII

### THE ITALIAN DISASTER

ITALIAN HEADQUARTERS, October 25th.

THE grand tour of the Carso day before yesterday was to have finished my period at the Front; I had kept an Italian military car very busy for a week and had dipped into the line all the way from the Trentino to the Adriatic. Yesterday and to-day, according to program, I was to write; and to-morrow and Saturday I am to finish out my ten days' leave with a look at beautiful, tight-shut, harassed Venice. But yesterday morning a party of correspondents going forward to Gorizia found one of their number missing and I was offered a seat in their car. I had not yet, as it happened, set foot in Gorizia itself. It turned out to be an adventure—as much of an adventure as I want in one day.

As we rounded the heel of Monte San Michele—green with trees and grass again after the terrible blasting it received in the attacks of last year—the town came out white against the red hills of the Carso about it and the Nile-green mists of its own valley. There was a lot of shooting. Our guns were banging or booming on every hill. As

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we waited by the door of a certain headquarters for permission to enter the sector, I was certain I could hear continually the slighter but more dangerous noise of arrivals.

Being but a soft civilian, I grew a little nervous. I was ashamed of my nerves—I forgot them completely—when we came out into the main streets of this pretty Venetian town and found civilian life still going on calmly under the pouring rain and the whistling shells. Women in shawls and pattens scurried along under umbrellas, paying no more attention to the great whistling overhead than they did to the raindrops.

Through an open doorway I caught a glimpse of a butcher cutting meat, while a crowd of waiting women chattered over the counter—the next day would be meatless, and buying was brisk. We dropped into a stationer's; he was doing a lively business with post cards for the soldiers to send home. A bookshop displayed the latest shockers in Italian, and even in French, together with the illustrated papers. A haberdasher had dressed his window with shirts and cravats in brilliant greens and pinks, and had lettered the sign: This lot a bargain!—or the Italian equivalent of those words. Yet here and there, between these centers of trade and activity, were buildings wholly ruined by shells; were peppered walls; were shattered window panes. For the Austrian lines on San Marco are scarcely two miles from the center of the town.

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This destruction is all recent. When the Austrians held the city the Italians forbore to bombard—this was an unrescued Italian population. It was taken, a year ago last August, by a surprise attack in which it suffered very little. Since then, however, the Austrians have been searching it with intermittent flurries of shells. In spite of all this, some two or three thousand courageous people have come back to see it through in their own town. I regretted much my ignorance of the language and my haste; I wanted to talk to these people, for each one must have had a great story. Indeed, as we passed a certain shop our captain remarked:

“That family is interesting. They had four grown sons. Two of them, when war was declared, managed to get across the Austrian border and join our armies—one of these has been killed fighting for Italy. Another was caught by the Austrians and hanged—they are great hangmen. The fourth was hidden for fourteen months in a cellar; he never came out until we entered Gorizia, rescued him, and took him into our army.”

We drove on through the town and up the winding way to the citadel, which overlooks the San Marco lines. Parking our car in a sheltered spot, we climbed on, past walls and buildings which showed more and more the marks of war. The guns were now going very heavily on both sides and before us. While we stood in the plaza fronting the church of the citadel, now pretty badly



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battered, a machine gun, from far below, began a rat-a-tat-tat-tat-tat. "It sounds like a little attack," said the captain. "Perhaps we may get a look." We pressed on upward to a certain dirt parapet. It was raining heavily. "I think it is misty enough so that we may look over," said the captain; "I don't believe we can be spotted on a day like this."

Through the mists rose San Gabriele, and below us lay tawny San Marco, now spitting fire. The captain pointed out the Austrian line. He scarcely needed do that. Whip, whip, whip—puffs of white were breaking along the trench line with wonderful mathematical alignment and rhythm. It was scarcely a mile away. I adjusted my field glasses to see whether I could catch a glimpse of the gray line when it broke from the trenches.

I must stop here to tell how we were arranged. I stood at the right of the group, with the captain close beside me; Thompson was on the other side of him. A little farther to the left Cortesi and Ward-Price formed a group of their own.

Suddenly, among the whistling shells, came one that whistled ten times as loud as the rest. I had a human impulse to duck. "No," my mind said, working in a flash; "that is passing overhead."

Something with all the force, the overwhelming monstrous force, of a wave on the beach, struck me on the shoulder and back. I could feel it roll up, up, over my head. The world was black. I was only aware of my mind, traveling with in-

credible rapidity over every part of my body and assuring me that I was not hurt—not in the least hurt. I was now in a trench below the parapet—how I got there I did not, somehow, know. I was standing, looking at the captain; he was talking, but I could not hear him, at first, for the ringing in my ears.

“Was it a three-inch shell?” I asked, trying to be professionally calm—for I was not at all certain that this shell was not going to be followed by another. “Oh, no; a hundred and fifty-nine—six-inch, English measurement,” he said. “We shouldn’t have heard the whistle of a three-inch shell. They don’t announce themselves.” “Only about six yards,” announced Ward-Price.

I looked back. A little on my right what had been the smooth line of the parapet was a trash heap of tangled iron, splintered boards and tossed earth. The soft wet dirt had smothered the explosion. I looked again and was aware that Thompson did not look natural. I realized then that he had lost his nose glasses and that a trickle of blood was running down from his temple to his right cheek. We informed him that he had lost his glasses and that he was hit. “Have I? Am I?” he said.

The captain and Ward-Price went back to the parapet and picked up his glasses, and we took him to the dressing station; for even a little wound like that may be infected. Thompson protested, until he remembered that he has one son in the

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army and another in the navy, and that he should be able to boast the first wound in the family.

Not until we were waiting under a shelter in the company of half a dozen Italian soldiers did I realize that I had been knocked down. Cortesi and Ward-Price had seen the rest of us tumble at their feet—I knocked down the captain, he knocked down Thompson; we all went over like a house of cards.

Thompson had evidently been hit by a flying piece of rock. To this moment I have no memory of going down; neither, curiously, was I conscious of hearing the explosion. However, I found my upper lip swelling; that must have been the member with which I hit the captain.

As we waited, the bombardment dying down a little, we remarked that this, which seemed a great adventure to us, was what soldiers in the trenches get all the time, as a part of the day's work; and Ward-Price quoted what a French officer had said to him of the visitor to the Front. "He seems to me," said this poet of the trenches, "like a little girl who sits before a lighted candle, thrusts her finger into the wick for a moment, says, 'See; I am burned!'—and smiles at you through the flame."

Under the hill we cleansed ourselves of the worst of the mud—I am still picking it out of neglected corners of my clothes—and motored back for tea in the *Café del Carso*; for Gorizia has a fine going café, managed by a resident who used to be a chemist before the war, but who started this estab-



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ishment in order that the civilians and soldiers in Gorizia might have a little touch of normal life. In most respects it was a regular Italian café, even to the row of liqueur bottles back of the tiny bar and the files of illustrated papers. The effect, however, was very dark; for at least a third of the window panes had been blown out and replaced by poster advertisements for a certain Dutch liqueur, which happened exactly to fit the sashes.

We stopped to write and post souvenir post cards; for the postmark of a town only two miles from the line is a war souvenir worth having, and the Gorizia postoffice has been doing business for more than a year. Then we scurried out, past the section that was getting shells.

It was a lively afternoon; we could perceive that, even when we got into the rear zone. Twice, when the motor stopped in little villages, I got the crack of arrivals. The preliminaries of an attack, which may come in a day or may be delayed for a fortnight—such is the way of attacks—have begun along this line. For several days we have known that not only Austrians but Germans, brought from the stripped Russian Front, are along this line.

My permission to go forward is over for the present; but this morning I had half a notion to give up Venice and spend my two remaining days of war-zone pass at Headquarters, listening to the gossip in case the attack does come within forty-eight hours.

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VENICE, October 26th.

The last words I find in my notes of yesterday rise up to reproach my judgment. The attack came last night and the news is not so good as heart might wish. This afternoon I was having tea on the Piazza of Saint Mark's, the most famous, the most pictured public Square in the world, with Mr. and Mrs. Carroll—he is our consul in Venice. It is a transformed Square now, the painted spires and pinnacles of its old beauty half hidden under sandbags and plank barricades.

It was a beautiful afternoon, warm and perfectly clear, and all Venice was strolling through the Square, chattering and loitering. I noticed that a crowd had gathered under the arcade behind me. "The afternoon communiqué is always posted there," said Carroll. "Let's have a look." Craning over the heads of the crowd, he translated it for me, his voice getting low and serious as he came to the final chilling paragraph: "The abandonment of the Bainsizza Plateau is to be expected."

When, having joined the rest of our party and talked a little of our disappointment out of ourselves, we grew conscious of our surroundings, I was aware that a curious change had come over the appearance of the crowds. Ten minutes before they had been streaming across the plaza. Now there was no movement. They had congealed into groups, talking low and seriously. Do not get the idea that there was any panic, or any sign

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of one; but it was a blow, and Venice was taking it seriously, as well she might. All that Italy had gained so splendidly in the August offensive gone in one stroke! If it would only stop there!

ROME, October 29th.

On Saturday evening, the inexorable law of military permits forced me to leave Venice and the war zone. I had spent the day ranging the town, which is almost as beautiful in its war dress of sandbags as it used to be in peace dress, when it was the heaven of tourists. Probably it has been the most consistently air-raided town in Europe. The enemy, with that streak of bad boy which seems to exist in every modern Teuton, has tried as hard for the ancient and irreplaceable monuments of Venice as for more useful destruction. There is no doubt that beautiful Saint Mark's has been a steady target. It has escaped damage so far—the religious believe through the intercession of the Virgin, whose miraculous statue stands on one of the few altars not now covered with sandbags. Indeed, as the records of injuries show, Venice has been very lucky.

The gondolas still ply as of old, and with very little increase over the old tariff; but the gondoliers are no more the young, romantic, dark-eyed Italians, wearing sashes, whose prototypes we see at every fancy-dress ball. They are old fellows; they look like city cabmen, wielding oars instead of whips. As you glide down the side canals,



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where you sit level with the basement windows, you see here and there regular piles of sandbags crowded tight up against the window bars. These are private shelters—no home, really, is complete without one now.

Even our hotel has its own shelter for guests. The hotels of Venice are not serving meals; but one eats very well, nevertheless, at either of two large cafés. On Friday night, when we expected an air raid, a Venetian friend warned me that, if I was dining late, I might do well to ask the head waiter where their shelter was. "I believe they reserve space for their customers," he said. But Venice is not in the least terrified. Like Gorizia, she has grown used to high explosives.

When I visited the city last, eighteen months ago, I found that the antique shops were selling beautiful goods at almost any price, in order to get ready money. That has changed; I imagine others have found this out and bought out the stocks. At any rate, the selection is now rather poor, and the prices are back where they used to be. War has queer effects on trade. One would suppose that the demand for Venetian glass would be dead. As a matter of fact, the glass factories complain not of the lack of business, but of the struggle to find workmen. One glass man told me his factory had orders ahead for more than two years.

You go from the hotel to the station down a dark canal. The porter of our hotel, who had come

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over with us, could get no satisfaction whatever from a sadly worried station master about the arrival of the Udine train. Being bribed, he circulated about, collecting and reporting rumors: The train was coming from Udine as usual. No train was coming from Udine. The sleeper was on the way from Udine, but was three hours late.

We grew a little too curious about the movements of the troops, and a military policeman, in spite of our military passes, herded us into a waiting room. It was packed with disheveled civilians. One pale, worn woman, bareheaded, sat in the corner, with four children, including a baby at her breast, huddled about her. From old memories of Belgium, I picked these as refugees.

Yet, at midnight a train did arrive from somewhere—and it included a sleeper. We had to do some lively dodging through military trains before we got our places. The blinds of railroad trains are strictly drawn in the war zone. From the moment I entered, all observation was shut off. When, finally, I woke and compared the stations we were passing with the map, I found that we had been shunted far off on a side line; and the trip to Rome, which should have taken twelve hours, took twenty-five.

ROME, November 2d.

Tragic things have happened, as all the world will know by the time this reaches America—not

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fatal things, but tragic. They were going on with incredible swiftness during those two days when I was in Venice. I can believe the news, but I cannot really imagine it. Udine, where I had dined in good company on Wednesday evening—Udine, which I left on Thursday leading its usual busy, calm, confident life of a war-zone town, was in process of evacuation on Saturday; to-day it is not an Italian headquarters, but an Austrian. Gorizia, where we had our shell adventure on Wednesday, was, in forty-eight hours, empty of its brave civilian population, which had stood by. We were, I dare say, the last visitors of Allied nationality for the present.

I spoke somewhere in the beginning of these letters concerning the transformations of war—how certain little cities I had seen under shells were, as the Italian lines pushed on, restored to the semblance of peace. Another and hideous transformation has followed the want of the black magician, War—Gradisca, San Lorenzo, Monfalcone and Cormons are all German or Austrian tonight.

How it happened, except that something broke, I shall not try to say here. I have seen the Italian Army, however; I know how stalwart it is, how efficient, how well-organized; and I believe it is only a set-back, coming on a stroke of bad luck, on a wave of low morale.

I lived in Paris through the first fortnight of the Verdun battle. Paris of those days was like Rome



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of these—the same serious crowds; the same eyes that gaze and see not; the same—exactly the same—rumors in certain irresponsible places; and the same gathering of heroic determination. Refugees are already coming in from the captured province of Friuli; the newspapers are collecting funds; the government has cleared out a series of small hotels to house the destitute.

In one of those refuges lives a man who, a week ago, was the magnate of the country about Udine, rich in lands and factories. To-day he has not a franc to his name; nor does he know whether he shall ever have. Country people, in the strange peasant dress of the northern provinces, wander about the streets, dragging their children behind them and gaping at the sights. And the groups through which they weave are heavy-eyed.

Several circumstances add to the poignancy of the human tragedy: When, at the beginning of the war, the Germans drove through Belgium the inhabitants had several days of notice, after all. It was known that the German Army was coming on like a steady flood, and people were prepared for the final hour when they packed their little bundles and departed. Here it was a bolt out of the blue. One hour, you were going about your occupation as usual; the next you were running away.

A further personal burden lies on the hearts of civilian Italy. In these times accurate lists of the killed, wounded and missing are impossible. The army is too busy with something else. It will be

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long before these facts can be collated and the people at home can know.

Yet the army is standing; it is a good army, a great army; and we who lived through the days before the Marne and Verdun know the strength of a free people with the enemy on its soil. That is the thought which is stirring Rome and is putting the last ounce of fight into Italy—the enemy is in Friuli! An Italian friend put it this way to me yesterday:

“I have seen,” he said, “that American moving-picture film which showed the invasion of America. I remember that I could not be stirred by it as were my American friends; to me it was only a show. Now Italy is invaded. It is not a show. It is a reality. You sympathize—but you cannot know.”

## CHAPTER XVIII

### A WARTIME JOURNEY

PARIS, November, 1917.

RAILROAD travel, though very uncomfortable in these days, is so interesting that one is tempted to record every little suburban trip. All day, on the second stage of the journey from Rome, we were encountering French and British troops going forward to the defense of the Piave line. From cattle cars along the sidings fresh blond English faces grinned good-humoredly under trench caps and British cheers thanked us as we pitched cigarettes from our car window.

Not putting too fine a point on where and how I saw them, there were Frenchmen also, waving greetings and blowing kisses to the ladies or lilting snatches of song—the Frenchman is always merry when he sings, as the Englishman is lugubrious. Here and there we had a chance to talk with them; and we found a certain Roman rumor to be founded on truth: Both the British and the French are glad, very glad, to be going into Italy.

“You see, monsieur,” said a poilu, shifting his pack to get a light from my cigarette, “one grows weary of the same old trenches. Perhaps we can



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get them in the open, and then—*pouf!*” A gunner of the British Army, his cap festooned with the flowers bestowed by dark-eyed Italian maidens, remarked on the climate. “Puts joy in your ’eart, it does!” he said. “Ypres in winter is ’ell!”

Everything, on the Italian side, wore a holiday air. It is the land of winter flowers, and some of the detachments marched, like the army in “Macbeth,” under a wood, not of forest green but of floral green and red and white, so handsomely had the ladies done by them. Every building flew pavilions of French, British and Italian flags; every wall bore municipal proclamations welcoming the victors of the Marne and Somme. Now and then an American flag showed amid the others, and when I investigated I always found that the shop or house belonged to some Italian who had worked in the United States. “When will the United States declare war on Austria?” these citizens of the two countries always asked.

We stopped for the night at Nice, after an evening run past Monte Carlo, whose lights, seen on a promontory across a dark bay, still rim the terraces with their old brilliance. Nice, be it known, was, before the war, the largest resort, perhaps the most fashionable, on the Riviera—the winter playground of Europe. The Riviera is a more cultivated and finished version of the Californian coast; and Nice is similarly a more permanent and better-built Atlantic City. Even in peacetime, November is a little out of the Riviera season; as

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it was, when we came to luncheon next day in the hotel we found only three tables set.

Along the Promenade des Anglais, the magnificent sea road that in peacetime more than matches the boardwalk at Atlantic City for display and for sweep of life, one sees only the old or the very young, the mutilated, the ailing. Here an old Englishman, too feeble for any usefulness in the war, is rolling along in a chair propelled by an antique valet, himself well beyond military age. There sits a woman in widow's weeds, her eye on three well-behaved French children. All along are men in uniform or in civilian clothes, with the ribbon of the War Cross in their button-holes, lolling or strolling with the weak motion of convalescence.

As for fashion, there isn't any; the people wear old clothes, just barely neat. The town may freshen up a bit in the season, for even last year French people of means were still sometimes giving themselves the luxury of a short holiday; but just now Nice is as dead as an abandoned bird's-nest.

In Rome it was impossible to secure sleeper reservations on the French trains. When I applied at the Nice station I found that one sleeper was going through to Paris every night, but that the berths were engaged for eight days ahead. In the present state of French passenger traffic I could not arrange an all-daylight schedule. It was a case of sitting up all night—a feature of travel to which one grows accustomed in the war coun-

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tries—or of getting *couchettes* from the conductor. The *couchette* I have explained before. It is a substitute for a berth in these days and circumstances, when there is no energy or labor for washing extra sheets or caring for extra bedding. The two parallel seats of a European first-class compartment made very good couches. In certain carriages upper couches may be let down from the walls; this gives, all together, accommodation for four—a sleeping compartment without bedding. By energy and diplomacy I secured two *couchette* tickets just as we pulled out for Marseilles, with a train crowded almost to standing capacity. So great was the demand for passage, indeed, that the girl conductor, doing the best she could to accommodate every one, was obliged to disregard the distinction between first, second and third class passengers; and a group of *poilus*, going back to the line from their leave, were permitted to grab standing room in the corridor of our carriage.

This line still runs a dining car; and the fare, being cooked by Frenchmen, is good, though simple. However, it was switched on to the rear of our train, some five or six cars away from us; and when the porter announced dinner and we filed out we found that we must fight for our meal. Getting along the corridors was like bucking the line. You edged and crawled about people; you climbed over soldierly bags, packs and kit trunks; you remained stuck for five minutes at a time while



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the press in front arranged itself to let you through.

Coming back, heavy with food, was even worse. On the return trip I collided with the group of poilus packed into the end of our corridor. They had been dining from their packs. I am not sure but that their relatives, on bidding them good-by, had slipped in something a little stronger than army red wine, for they were still singing, while the officers farther down the corridor regarded them indulgently. One of them, a magnificent, strapping Alpine Chasseur, asked, as he rose to let me through: "English? Ah, the English are our brave allies!"

"No—American!" I replied.

"Ah!" he roared, opening his arms and taking me in. "The Americans are my comrades. Listen! You must sing with us—French and Americans together—to beat the dirty boche. Is it not so?" Therefore, I must remain for five minutes, being instructed in the words and music of a song which will never be reprinted in the hymn books.

He is a cold and reserved person who, in these days, does not get acquainted at once with every one in his compartment. Two of our fellow travelers were especially interesting—a slim, neat-stepping, clean-cut Scotch engineer, and a big blond French captain. The Scotchman had been down to a Southern port in pursuance of the only trade a Scotchman may have nowadays—beating

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the Germans. He looked as though he had acquired a new and aggravated case of sunburn. That was caused, he explained to us, by a flame-blast which hit him in the face during some of his experiments. He had recently been working in England with submarines, and he dropped some general observations which help to explain why Germany is having so much trouble getting volunteers for her submarine crews.

“It’s the monotony that kills in that game,” he said. “Nothing to do but sit cooped up in a narrow little hole, with the sea pounding all around you, for hours and hours. You sleep lashed to a beam and you eat standing up. I used to say to myself: ‘I won’t look at my watch again until I’m sure an hour has passed.’ I’d look finally—and it would be ten minutes.”

The captain spoke good English, for until the war broke out he was chief engineer of a French liner running into New York Harbor. He came from a town near Lille, where his family is yet cooped up by the Germans.

“But my mother is dead,” he went on; “the news came from some people who were repatriated through Switzerland. So are most of my uncles and aunts. One of my brothers has gone into this war. My home town has been nearly destroyed; the old family house where we have lived for generations is gone. It doesn’t much matter now what happens to me.”

He might have gone on with his old job, since

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France needs seafaring men. But six months after the war began, he enlisted and worked up from the ranks. For more than a year he has been steadily at Verdun, where really the great battle has never ceased; and he wears on his right sleeve two of the notches that designate wounds. Before the evening was over he had given us a really precious souvenir of the war—a paper knife made from the copper of a German shell band which he had hammered out in a dugout under shell fire—"to keep my mind engaged," he said.

We stretched ourselves out finally, fully dressed and covered with what wraps we had, on the shelves of the *courette* compartment—three men and a woman. The two others were an American ambulance man, who had gone South on the matter of a commission, and a bossy middle-aged Frenchman. Why we three Americans let him dictate to us I do not know, unless it was the fact that he was in his own back yard. He dictated how much, or rather how little, ventilation we might have. He dictated that I should not snore, and I, wakened, lay and meekly listened to his snores for half an hour.

The compartment growing too stuffy for American lungs, I rose and went into the corridor to see whether I could get a breath of fresh air. I gave it up for humanity's sake. Stretched all along the floor lay officers, wrapped in their fur coats, their heads pillowed on kit bags. Far up were my Chasseur Alpin and his friends, lying in a pictur-



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esque heap of dark and light blue. These were the unlucky, who had been late in applying for *couchettes*; and this was the Nice-Paris express, in old winters one of the world's trains de luxe!

Our bossy Frenchman dictated the hour when we should wake up. The porter appeared at the door and the Frenchman dictated that he should not fold up the top *couchettes*. What was the use when we were getting near Paris? We worms were about to turn, when the Scotch engineer entered. He had brought along only a light overcoat by way of a wrap, and he had found that the floor was too drafty for health; so he had been standing up all night. Obeying the Frenchman, we left the top couches down, and he turned in under my ulster for an hour's nap. So, in a gray, humid, cold November morning, we came into Paris.

PARIS, November 25th.

I have been away from the heart of the civilized world for nearly four months. Chance travelers, coming down to Italy, had described to me the new American invasion, saying that Paris had become almost a Yankee town; and indeed, before I left in August, I seemed to meet an old acquaintance every time I ventured on the boulevards. I had expected, therefore, a recrudescence of old gayety—the cafés more lively, the theaters and cinemas more crowded—the irrepressible American whooping it up a little, war or no war.

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Never has the issue so disappointed my expectations. There is a kind of grimness, a sense of reality, about the American colony nowadays—a state of mind that has communicated itself to the newcomers.

In the first two years of the war the Americans permanently resident here took their war work, if not lightly, at least with good spirits and a kind of sense of adventure. They were helping France in every way they knew; they were tremendously sympathetic; but, after all, it was not their war.

All that is changed. The young men among them have gone into khaki; to a great extent the older men, past useful military age, have found places as interpreters, as Y. M. C. A. and Red Cross workers. Women who formerly merely dallied with their workrooms and the hospitals have buckled down to their eight hours a day. All this leaves small time for gaiety and frivolity.

As for the newcomers—people on special service or lately arrived officers—they merely skim through Paris, usually so busy with practical matters that they have little time for frivolity. There was a tendency, noticeable last summer, for loafers in khaki to hit up the pace at two or three famous Parisian bars. The army sat down hard on that. On the whole, this American invasion has rendered Paris, if anything, a little more dour and determined in appearance.

Circumstances have worked with the policy of

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the army. The alluring cocktail, chief temptation of the American on the loose, may be had no more in appreciable quantities. France now manufactures no gin or whisky, and of late the importation of those liquors has been forbidden. The gin stock is virtually all gone; not once in a blue moon can one find a café with the basic material for a Martini or a Bronx. Whisky also is growing scarce; soon the tempting Manhattan will tempt no more. Champagne cocktails and various mixtures of French brandy are the rounder's only hold. At the famous bars I have mentioned before, custom is falling off to such an extent that some of them talk about closing for the war.

And when you do find a group about those bars the conversation is not about things frivolous and trivial, but mostly about what they intend to do. Billy, who has run an ambulance off and on since the second year of the war, is in aviation, and visits among us for a day or so while he awaits his orders to the school of acrobatics. Bob has his brevet as a *chasse pilote*; he drops in during the course of a two-days' leave, granted that he may complete his kit before proceeding to the Front.

Johnny, wearing a captain's uniform in spite of his gray hairs, is beyond military age; but he speaks the language perfectly, even the latest Parisian slang. So he became an interpreter, until it was discovered that his knowledge of the people and their business methods eminently fitted him for a job in the quartermaster's department.



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He stops only between trains. He is on his way to hurry up a consignment from the South. Harry is still wearing his ambulance uniform and hanging about a little disconsolate while he waits to see whether he is going to get the commission to which his education and his year's experience in shell-dodging with a jitney car entitle him. If he fails in this, he is going into the ranks.

The American over here means business. His external appearance, his revised way and manner, prove that.

## CHAPTER XIX

### OUR OWN TROOPS

AMERICAN FRONT, December 1st.

I AM doing a turn with oratory for a week, talking at the various Y. M. C. A. huts to the American soldiers. This evening, after two changes of cars, I was dumped down on this hotel, in a certain town of Northern France, centering a district of camps. The hotel, I could see at first glance, is going through one of those periods of hectic prosperity and of general strain which have at intervals struck all hotels in Northern France since the great war began. It has a tiny lobby and office, a fair sized dining room and two floors of simple chambers upstairs.

A time-expired guidebook of ante-bellum days tells me that the price for *pension*—which means room and board—used to be eight francs a day. The guests, I suppose, were mostly commercial travelers or dealers up for the cattle market. It costs more now; and yet, when I consider the increased price of commodities, I cannot greatly blame pleasant white-haired madame the landlady for assessing us three or four francs for a bed. At dinner to-night we had three sittings, and an

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overflow dined at a table with a turkey-red cloth, set in the lobby.

I write now at that table, by the light of a suspended oil lamp. On the lower end an American lieutenant, who arrived late and very hungry, is eating an omelet, which he managed to wheedle out of madame after the dining room closed. There is a large porcelain stove in the middle of the room; this evening, when the air is full of chill humidity, it has become a mighty popular piece of furniture. Grouped about it now are two army chauffeurs, a lieutenant of engineers and a Y. M. C. A. worker, toasting their hands and feet. For the rest, this tiny room, its windows hermetically darkened to balk the enterprise of hostile aircraft, is littered with kit bags, little wooden kit trunks, military fur coats, helmets, gas masks and miscellaneous paraphernalia.

I shall fare a little better than the rest. The correspondents have established a mess upstairs, in what used to be the ladies' parlor of the hotel; so I need not struggle for a place in the dining room. However, I must lodge three in a room, fortunately with a separate single bed. I used to laugh at the Northern French custom, initiated I believe from the Germans, of sleeping under a young feather bed. As I deposited my bag and looked over my quarters this evening, that style of cover looked very good to me.



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December 2d.

Between mid-afternoon and "lights out" I was rushed around in an automobile for four speeches, and I pity the sorrows of the poor candidate. In fact, they have rushed me so fast that the recollections of the four stops are already jumbled in my mind—I remember the Y. M. C. A. huts as a composite of low board buildings, with a popular stove in the middle and a counter, doing a land-office business in cigarettes, chocolate and chewing gum, at one end. The Y. M. C. A. has not quite finished its struggle for comforts such as stoves, and luxuries such as reading matter; but it has done measurably well, I take it from a two-days inspection.

Work is the order of all the daylight hours in these short winter days; but when night falls the weary soldier hurries over to this common assembly room for a look at such magazines and illustrated newspapers as may have reached camp, for a smoke, and for a chance to talk it over.

I have not seen American soldiers, as a body, for many years; meantime my vision on military affairs has adjusted itself to the British Tommy, the French and Belgian poilu and the Italian peasant soldier. And I was struck to-day, every time I entered one of the huts, with the size and physical quality of the American men. They are the finest, most upstanding specimens that any nation among the Allies has sent to France.

They make eager and responsive audiences; they

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are keen to hear about the war from any one who has seen it. They have fallen already into the routine mind of the soldier, whose horizon on this infinitely great struggle is bound to be limited. The average man in the ranks knows less about this war than the average man at the rear. The local newspapers do not help our soldiers much, since few of them read French. And indeed, that very good provincial newspaper published in a city not far away could not possibly meet the sudden demand—even though it were published in English—on account of the limited paper supply. The English-language newspapers of Paris reach this rather remote section of our camps in limited quantities. After every talk my cicerone had to tear me away from an eager group, each waiting to put his own pet question about the war—its causes, its technic and its general condition.

Last night, beside a roaring porcelain stove, I talked late with the other correspondents. When I entered my room and lighted the kerosene lamp I found not one man, but two, asleep in my bed. I was developing the indignation proper to the circumstances when I noticed their clothes neatly folded on chairs at one side. They were American lieutenants. I remembered, then, that a lot of newly arrived officers had been dumped down on us during the afternoon.

It did not seem fitting, somehow, that defenders of the country should be turned out into the cold for a mere civilian's comfort. I was pre-

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paring to sleep under my ulster on a sofa in our private dining room when I learned that one of the correspondents had gone to Paris. I stole his bed, in turn, and all was well.

December 4th.

Two dinners at the messes of battalion officers stand out in my memory of the past two days. The first lot of them were housed in a most picturesque old farm building on the edge of a village. Madame herself, wife of the peasant proprietor—now mobilized—cooked dinner at an open fireplace in kettles hung from a crane. The food was good—"but French," remarked the officers in apology. However, we had American-baked white bread and apple pie—all this from a mess near by that had an American army cook.

None of these officers, I found, had ever been in France before the war; and the little ways of the French people were still new and amusing. They couldn't understand, for example, why madame, accommodating as she was about other things, should not serve the vegetables with the meat course. This canon of that ritual which the French make of dining always amuses or puzzles the outlander. I tried once to get the waiter at a certain famous little French restaurant to break the rule. He refused, with a superior haughtiness which branded me at once as a barbarian; and ever since he has taken my tips like tainted money.



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It proceeds—and this I told the officers—from the economy of the French in regard to fuel. The humble French housewife, beyond the memory of man, has kept only one stove-cover working at a time; and that domestic habit has become fixed, even in the luxurious establishments of the rich. This mention of French economy in fuel started us on the burning question—rather the freezing question—of the hour. The French, amused by our little ways, say we are the greatest wood burners they ever heard of; the American Army wonders how the French ever live through a winter!

It is a question of climate and acclimatization. France is never smitten with that blizzard arctic cold which sweeps our North. The winter weather is mostly just chilly, with a touch of misty humidity that drives the chill into one's bones. Now to such a climate one grows inured. It is so in San Francisco—which is much warmer in winter than Northern France, but does have a touch of that same chill humidity. The acclimated native goes about quite indifferent to weather. Most of the houses have neither heating stoves nor furnaces; on exceptionally cold days the native simply lights up the fireplace and is comfortable. The Easterner shivers the first six months, calling the interiors positively arctic; grown acclimated, he never notices the chill again. On the other hand, the Californian going East for the first time stifles in the tropic interiors by which

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the people of the snow country store bodily warmth to meet the cold out of doors.

The French are acclimated to cooler interiors than ours. Being economical and close-living, they save on fuel by all kinds of devices. For one thing, there are the feather beds, which I have mentioned before. These keep one toasting warm all night. For another thing, they are far less careful about ventilation than we—and ventilation means cold air. Again, they go in for very heavy underclothing.

The army, being young, vigorous and in training, will get acclimated in a month or so; this is the first bout with winter under strange conditions. Just now many of them feel like that soldier on leave who made an excursion to the birthplace of Joan of Arc and remarked that he didn't wonder she let herself be burned to death!

No sooner were they established than the howl arose for stoves—an unprecedented quantity of stoves. The fuel fortunately is at hand—France has plenty of forest. Squads of axmen got to work and ripped out such quantities of stovewood as to amaze the French. “One would say,” remarked the natives, “that they intended to burn their way across the lines!”

Madame herself, being interviewed, allowed charily that Americans need much heat—she always thought, before, that America was a cold country. Fine, stalwart, strong-faced madame, wife of a soldier, and a good soldier herself in her

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own way, has been a mother to this mess. When first they came they found in each room a bunch of flowers, bought or begged from the flower pots of her city neighbors. She mends their stockings, sews on their buttons and corrects their French while she laughs at it. "For," as she said to me when we parted, "the French and the Americans are as brothers—is it not so?"

To the other mess we came through biting air, for the weather had changed, bringing a touch of our native winter. Through a door in a long board shack with dimmed windows we came into the presence of a battalion dining at rows of tables and talking clamorously—in high spirits after a day's work in the frosty air. The officers were seated in a little room partitioned off from the rest; but they ate the same fare—meat pie, good white bread, mashed potatoes, apple pie and real American coffee. This sounds commonplace probably; only one who has lived for months on foreign food, with war bread, can know how good it tasted.

However, there was one bit of variety: Just as we were sitting down an orderly arrived from an adjoining mess and, duly presenting the compliments of the captain, gave us a mess of wild boar's flesh killed that day.

In this country the wild boar has become a war-time nuisance. He hangs out in the thickets, from which he makes his forays against growing crops. Once the sporting tendencies of the native gentry



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kept them down; but since the war began they have enjoyed great immunity in their night raids. And some of our men, waiting for orders or for billets, have taken to the sport.

You use a blunderbuss of a shotgun, loaded with buckshot of exaggerated size. So armed, you wait in a path of the thicket while dogs range it, driving the boars ahead of them. You have only a momentary chance to shoot when the boar jumps across your path. The captain who headed the party that day got no boars, but the corporal who went with him got two.

December 5th.

There's a great shortage of civilian doctors in France. The medicos are mobilized, up to the age of forty-five, as army surgeons. Of course many of them have been killed, and under war-time conditions the schools are not turning out men to take their places. Even the older men have volunteered in large numbers for base hospital service. Just now only five thousand physicians are available for the needs of all civilian France. It is bad enough in the cities, but much worse in the country.

A country physician needs good physical strength and means of transportation. Both of these essentials are lacking to the old fellows, who are doing the best they can in the small towns. The district in which the American Army finds itself camped has suffered exceedingly from lack of

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medical attention. Work as they may, the four or five old-line practitioners cannot possibly cover the region. Peasants have died up here because the doctor could not be brought in time, and old chronic diseases have fared badly.

So the American Red Cross, while waiting for patients of our own blood and breed, has arranged a system of caring for the civilians of the region. It was done, I may say, with the hearty approval of the resident physicians, who have been worrying their hearts out over the situation. At various villages we have established dispensaries, where the peasants or townspeople may come once or twice a week with their ailments and troubles. Squads consisting of a Red Cross doctor, a nurse and a driver make constant rounds, attending to the walking cases in the dispensary and visiting the bedridden.

The job is not all altruistic; by this means we keep watch over contagious disease, so guarding the health of our army. Again, we have looked out for the ultimate interests of the French physicians. Attendance is not given free. The nurse carries with her a cash can, into which the patients are supposed to drop something when the consultation is finished. This money will be used for the relief of French physicians' families orphaned or impoverished by the war.

Yesterday, since my speaking engagements came late, I made the rounds with a regular crew. The doctor, up to three or four months ago, was a state

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physician in New York. The nurse, Madame V., was transferred from the regular French hospital service at the Front to the Red Cross because she speaks perfect English; she finished her education at Oxford. Like thousands of well-educated Frenchwomen, she entered a nurses' training college at the beginning of the war, was graduated and went to work at the Front. Since then she has had her roof carried from over her head by a shell; she has worked twenty-four hours a day in the periods of the great attacks; she has gone back with retreats and forward with advances. She was perhaps the first woman from the outside world the people of Noyon saw after their deliverance, for she entered the town with the advanced hospital units. "It was really embarrassing," she said—"men, women, children, kissing one!"

I learned only incidentally that her husband, an eminent scholar in time of peace and an officer in the war, has been reported missing for a year. All this came out as we whirled in an American jitney machine through winter fields, through picturesque French villages, which looked odd, somehow, with their filling of tall, uniformed, easy-moving Americans.

The doctor, bundled in his fur coat against the icy blasts, took up the conversation in his turn. The French peasant is a new and entertaining type to him. He was just beginning to learn that the individual of this species is as cagy as a Scotchman or a Cape Codder.



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“When we first started,” he said, “I thought the dispensaries were a failure. The first time round we had no patients at all. That seemed odd to me, because we’d been officially informed concerning several old chronic cases. The second time we had patients—but people with slight or imaginary ailments; still nothing serious. It wasn’t until the third go that the real invalids began to send for us. You see, they were trying us out to find whether there was anything phony in our proposition! There’s the town now,” he added as we came over a hill. “In the first house, there, I performed an emergency operation on a kitchen table two weeks ago—patient doing nicely.”

We established ourselves in a little room with a bijou stove—a concession to Americanism—round which we fairly wrapped ourselves. We had not long to wait for our first and only walking patient at that stop. He was an extremely aged peasant, gnarled and knotted with work and rheumatism. However, it wasn’t the rheumatism which bothered him just then, as he explained in the dialect of the country, which even Madame V., from a different part of France, had some difficulty in understanding. It was something that itched all the time!

“Make him show his shoulder,” said the doctor. “Aha! Ask him whether he has slept in a bed the soldiers from the Front have occupied.”

He had. He had “soldier itch!” said the doctor.

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Whereupon madame, who has had much to do with that complaint in the military hospitals, gave him straight directions in French about bathing, boiling his clothes and his blankets and disinfecting the house, while the doctor measured out pills. She talked to him as one does to an erring child.

“We cure that in three days in the hospitals,” said madame when he had dropped his contribution into the can and gone his way, “but he’ll never follow directions, I suppose.”

A long wait, during which we hugged the stove; then arrived a little French boy in a black blouse, begging monsieur the doctor to see his mother, who was in bed. We trailed along a silent, almost deserted village street to a neat interior. A great fireplace, with a mantelpiece of black old wood at least six feet high, occupied one side of a dark room; on the shelf of the mantel were ranged sacred images, a crucifix, some very ugly modern vases containing dried grasses and two or three pieces of old copper glazeware, which roused all the collector in me. At one side of the room was a recessed bed, like a cupboard, on which lay a woman with a severe face and two black braids. I played with a puppy, which had burrowed into the warm ashes of the fireplace, while the doctor and the nurse made their low-voiced inquiries and their diagnosis.

“Simply a case of acute jaundice,” said the doctor as we left.

That was all for the day in this hamlet; I can-

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not call it exactly a town. Farm life in France is organized on its own peculiar system; a dozen American soldiers, giving me their first impressions of France, have mentioned the wide uninhabited spaces and the multiplicity of very small towns. The French peasant, unlike our own farmer, seldom lives on his land. He dwells, for sociability, in a little town with two or three hundred other farming people. Thence he goes forth to cultivate his fields, which may lie two or three kilometers out of the village.

We visited a succession of these hamlets, where we attended a little boy with a rash, a woman with a crisis of digestion and an old lady with acute rheumatism. We hurried back to our first stopping place for luncheon—we had brought along our provisions, and madame cooked them for us over our busy little stove. After luncheon we motored into a fair-sized town, with a *mairie* and a communal school. And the first person we spied was a portly man, in a long frock coat and a tall hat, running, and with his hands in his pockets. A top hat is a rare sight in France nowadays; so I turned to look at him.

“That can’t be any one but the undertaker,” said Madame V. “I am afraid the poor old lady is dead!”

“Very likely,” said the doctor. “A violent stroke of apoplexy,” he explained to me. “It occurred the night before our last visit. There really wasn’t anything to be done except show



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them how to make her as comfortable as possible. She's the first patient we've lost."

Their forebodings were accurate, as we found when we reached the dispensary, where a small queue awaited us. For house-visits we had an old woman, bedridden for thirty years, a little touched in the head by her infirmity—wherefore she wanted to know emphatically why American medicine did her no more good than French—and the janitor of the communal school. He, a gray-mustached old veteran of 1870, had one of those colds on the lungs that threaten pneumonia and, at his age, a quick end.

His little bright-eyed anxious wife did the honors, complimenting Madame V.—who wore our American Red Cross uniform—on her excellent French! She followed us down to the door when the consultation was over, inquiring anxiously whether we had dared tell the whole truth before her husband. Or was it worse than we said?

"It will be worse," cautioned Madame V. severely, "if he doesn't do exactly as we have ordered and stay indoors."

"Ah," sighed the wife, "but he is such a child—and such a gadabout!"

We stopped at one of the few isolated farm-houses in the region, where an infected finger gets attention at every round of the Red Cross car. The patient here was a farmer's wife, working the farm while her man fights for France. She

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pierced her finger with a thorn last October and blood poisoning had set in. It was a question, at first, whether it hadn't better be amputated; but the doctor, at her earnest desire, decided to have a try at saving it. And he has saved it, though it was a narrow squeak.

A grateful, decent woman of character she was, and she showed it in her severe, intelligent face. As she sat before the hollow of her great kitchen fireplace, backed by a beautiful old fire iron of the kind for which antique dealers struggle, she made a wonderful picture—all France in her stern beauty, her quiet air of resignation and her courage.

We had just established ourselves at the next stop when Suzette burst into the room, lighting up everything. Suzette is sixteen; she has a marvelous pair of big, long-lashed brown eyes, features as clean as though carved, and an air like that of a wild creature caught and half tamed. The dispensary crew knew Suzette. She drives the collecting wagon for her father, who owns the village creamery.

"She's here to put something over on us," said the doctor in English. "Ah! Didn't I tell you?"

For Suzette, her great eyes wandering in her characteristic expression of a wild thing, was talking French rapidly to Madame V.

"He is very ill, madame—ah, it is frightful! So ill he cannot mount himself to this place. So he stops at our house; and if madame and mon-

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sieur the doctor will come down there—and you could send your car to wait for you there—”

“Aha!” said Madame V., addressing us in English and controlling her expression. “That’s what ails the little lady—the car!”

“She has a crush on our military chauffeur,” said the doctor. “Every time we come it’s a new trick! Very well; we must humor the natives. Tell her it’s all right; tell him to run the car down to Suzette’s and wait. It will be good for his French, anyhow!”

Suzette gave us a backward glance of her big, untamed eyes as she left the room, which shows that she suspected our insight into her purposes; then we heard her racing down the stairs—heard the whir of a jitney engine starting.

After cleaning up the dispensary we visited a peasant house—and such a house! Really it wasn’t a house at all, but a barn, packed with hay and feed. Within, right and left of the entrance, and under a separate double roof, stood two cabin-like structures, so old that the oak beams were black. The doors had primitive handwrought latches and hinges; and they were carved crudely with deeds of the saints. How many centuries old they were only an antiquary has the right to guess.

We entered one of these doorways. The apartment within was beamed with the same old black oak, which seemed to have gathered the smoke of centuries. Opposite the great fireplace was a bed let into the wall—a cubbyhole bed, with two doors



## A REPORTER AT ARMAGEDDON

to guard one against dangerous night air. From the feather-bed covering appeared a man's face which seemed as old as the oak beams. Two old women, in shawls and caps, rose from beside the fireplace at our entrance and stood bobbing.

"There's nothing the matter with him except the weakness of extreme old age," said the doctor. "And he's a little wrong in the head too."

As soon as he saw us he began to pour out his symptoms. I was getting up a conversation with the old women by the fireplace when I heard Madame V. say:

"But that couldn't possibly be!"

"It couldn't!" came the cracked voice from the bed. "*Sacré!*"

He rose from beneath the feather bed, the tassel of his nightcap shaking, and closed the doors on himself. That wall had become simply an oak panel, with two heart-shaped openings to prevent its occupant from suffocating.

"He behaves like a child!" said one of the old women. "If monsieur the American doctor will tell us what to do, and will leave us the medicine, we will attend to Jules."

So we left the medicine and directions, and went back to the house of Suzette. Our patient was there, an old man, very miserable with sciatica. Glancing through the doorway of the dairy office, where we held this consultation, I beheld Suzette and our chauffeur, sitting on stools beside the great fireplace, in intimate conversation.

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“Where do you live? Where did you just come from?” asked Madame V.

“Up there—by the barn,” said the patient, indicating that barn we had just visited—where Jules had shut himself in.

“If you could walk down here you could have walked to the dispensary, couldn’t you?” demanded Madame V.

“But certainly; only Mademoiselle Suzette told me to wait here for you,” said the patient.

“Aha!” said Madame V.

Through the doorway floated the voice of Suzette:

“*Mais vous parlez bien—c’est ça—c’est une corde. Dites-le, c’est une corde!*”

“*C’est une corde,*” came the voice of our military chauffeur.

I peeped through the doorway. Suzette and our chauffeur were playing Cat’s Cradle.

December 7th.

Yesterday afternoon I walked, on my own responsibility, to a little village near our town where a platoon of infantry and another of machine gunners have their quarters; a pasture not far away they use for their training. The village looks as old as the Roman Empire; the stone saints carved in the walls of one little hut, where six of our soldiers have established bunks, cannot date later than the thirteenth century. There is also a little Gothic church—“A thousand years old!”

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said one of our men. It looks all of that, though Gothic was not invented a thousand years ago.

When I came among them, at the edge of the village, the machine gunners were resting in the lee of the haystacks and the infantrymen were getting their *critique*. They were gathered in a circle about their platoon commander, while a French lieutenant told them what was wrong with their work and an interpreter translated.

These three formed a pretty contrast. The American was a big, sandy, serious-faced chap, New England American all through. The French instructor was of the Pyrenees, where France blends with Spain; he had a dark face, all fire but all determination too. The interpreter was a Flemish-French blond, broad-headed and thick-set. The interpreter translated the captain's flow of French to our platoon commander, and he translated from classical English to United States—like this:

The interpreter: "He says that your men did not go fast enough through that barrage. There is the point where they must advance with all speed."

The platoon commander: "You hear, fellows? The barrage belt, you remember, was in that hollow. You didn't hit it up fast enough there. Of course, when it is a real barrage, you'll be doing nine seconds—and then some; but you might just as well sprint in practice and get used to the pace!"



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After exhausting my untrained legs in following the machine gunners through a hypothetical advance, I strolled back into the village; and there I was hailed by my own name. I could not place the stalwart bronzed boy, in signal-corps uniform, who came from the doorway with his hand outstretched, till he mentioned an American moving-picture company. Then memory came with a rush.

In the spring before the great war began I had something to do with producing a moving-picture show. To a lost old New Jersey town we imported forty stage cowboys, with broncos, chaps, sombreros and similar trappings, and gave a faithful imitation of the Wild West. Buckley, here, had the accomplishment of "dying off his horse"—shoot him with a blank cartridge and he would do a realistic fall backward while the horse galloped on riderless. Because of which, he got ten dollars a day, while the rest drew five.

I have unexpected meetings like this every day. Already, at division headquarters, I had found a college mate serving as a captain in the quartermaster's department, and a budding American playwright, with whom I used to range Greenwich Village, in charge of billets for the staff. Day before yesterday who should come down the stairs of our hotel but a red-headed youth whom I last saw across a tennis net, engaged in putting me out of the great annual tournament of Scituate, Mass. He is a sergeant of engineers now. He had a few hours to wait in town, so we went to

## A REPORTER AT ARMAGEDDON

luncheon together; and some of his remarks deserve repetition.

"I'm mighty glad I came," he said; "it's a great adventure. I didn't know anything could be so interesting. Except for the weather just at present, I'm crazy about France and the French. I'm glad, too, that I've come in the ranks. You know I applied for a commission on the ground of militia experience, and they turned me down. I felt rather sore, but I'm more than reconciled. I'm not thinking of the army as a career; and this way I get so much closer to the people—and really, to the war. Yes; I prefer the ranks!"

Scratch anywhere among the French of the north and you turn up a human story. Now there's Henriette, for example.

She has been assigned by the hotel to look after the correspondents. She brings our morning coffee, cares for our rooms, keeps our fires supplied and waits on our table. Her hours are very long; war is a time of hard work. But she is always mightily efficient and absolutely cheerful. Henriette has just turned nineteen; she is black-eyed, black-haired and warm of expression. Her younger sister, just as pretty for a blonde as Henriette for a brunette, is chambermaid on the floor above. Henriette served me a late dinner last night; and, standing by the sideboard, tray in hand, she told me about her family and the war.

They lived in a town between Verdun and the border. Her mother was dead; the family con-

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sisted of her grandmother, her father, a sister and two brothers, younger than she. The Germans invaded that part of France, occupied their village and seized the town dignitaries as hostages on the day before war was declared.

Her father, a territorial, got away to his regiment. He was one of four brothers, all mobilized. This left the family in the hands of the Germans. All that autumn, Henriette says, the two young girls worked by compulsion, grinding wheat for the conquerors. And after a year the family was repatriated through Switzerland; but meantime the youngest boy had died. At Lyons, where they rested for a time, the other boy died.

Then the two girls and the grandmother went to live with relatives in a town near the Front. Last year the Germans began constant air raids on that town; the time came when the grandmother could stand it no longer. So they drifted back here, where the girls got places in the hotel. It is a new kind of experience for them; in peace their father is superintendent of a factory.

Of him they had no news until they were repatriated. Two of his brothers had been killed. One of them was his favorite; to avenge him he had volunteered for the first line. Twice wounded and sent back, he considered his duty done; and he is now road-mending again with his old territorial battalion.

“The war has done more than enough to our family!” said Henriette.



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