

ALSACE  
IN RUST AND GOLD

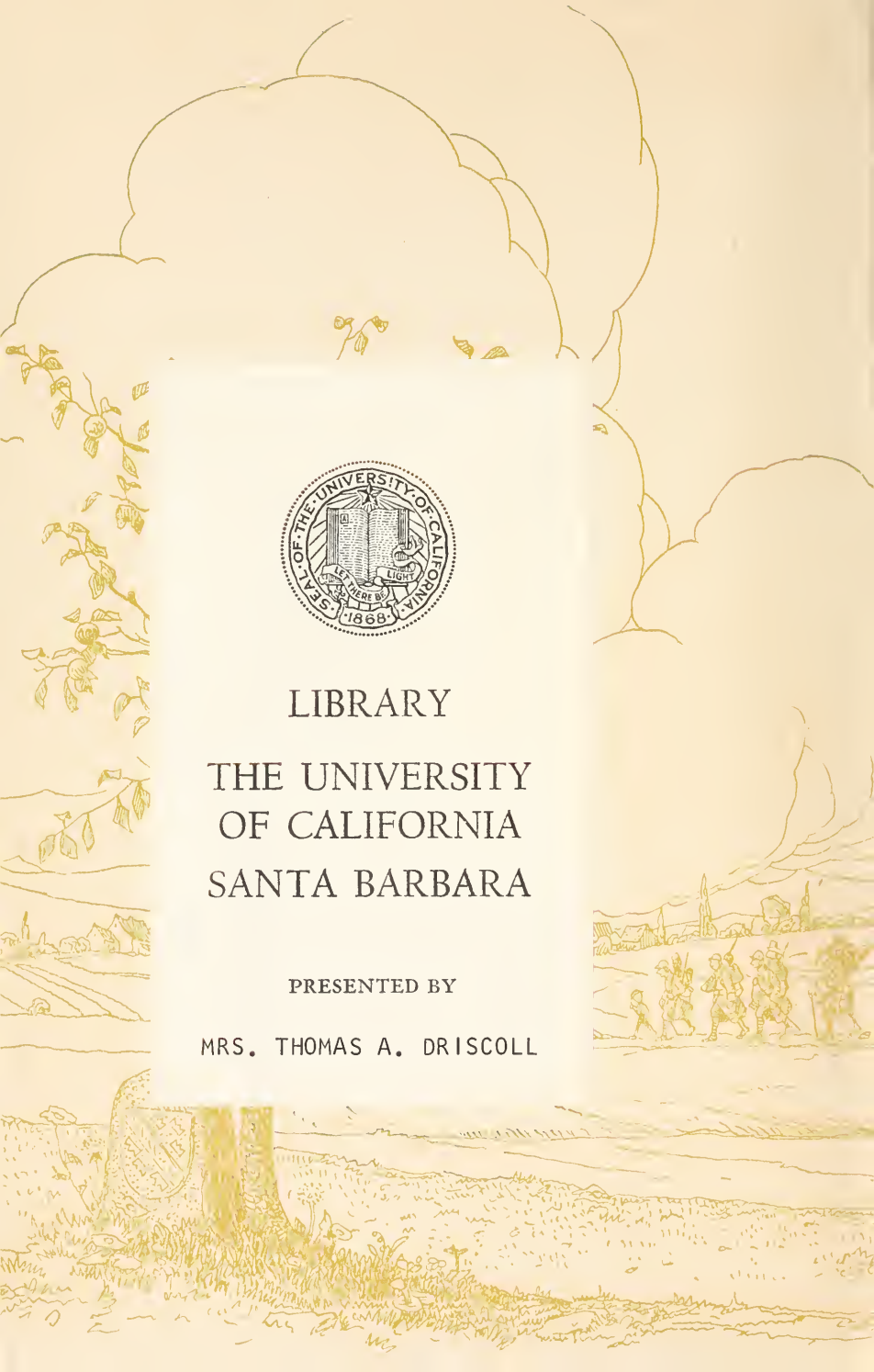
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ALSACE IN RUST AND GOLD



BOOKS BY  
EDITH O'SHAUGHNESSY

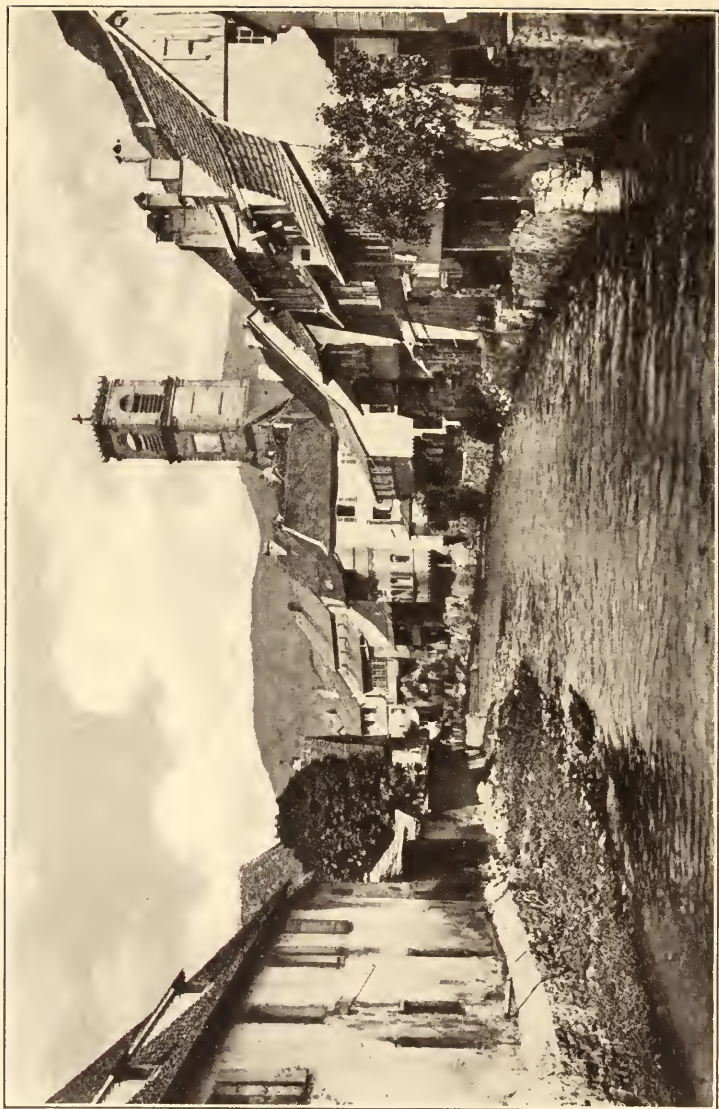
ALSACE IN RUST AND GOLD  
MY LORRAINE JOURNAL  
DIPLOMATIC DAYS

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HARPER & BROTHERS, NEW YORK  
[ESTABLISHED 1817]







THE RIVER DOLLER AT MASEVAUX

# ALSACE IN RUST AND GOLD

by  
EDITH O'SHAUGHNESSY

[MRS. NELSON O'SHAUGHNESSY]

AUTHOR OF

*"A Diplomat's Wife in Mexico"*

*"My Lorraine Journal" Etc.*

ILLUSTRATED



HARPER & BROTHERS PUBLISHERS  
NEW YORK AND LONDON

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ALSACE IN RUST AND GOLD

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Printed in the United States of America  
Published March, 1920

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## P R E F A C E

STRANGELY caught up out of the rut and routine of Paris war-work, not even choosing my direction (the Fates did that), contributing, however, the eternal readiness of my soul, which the poet says is all, I was conveyed, as on a magic carpet, to the blue valleys and the rust and gold and jasper hills of Alsace, where the color is laid on thick, thick. There I was one, during many historic days, of the delightful group of blue-clad, scarred, decorated officers forming the French Military Mission, which since the autumn of 1914 had administered the little reconquered triangle of Alsace and planted in it the seed for the re-Gallicizing of Alsace-Lorraine. It was a bit of French history in the making, which detached itself quite peculiarly free from the mass of war happenings, somewhat as a medallion from that against which it is placed.

My little book shows how humanly and simply the men of the French Military Mission, accustomed to supreme events, together with a woman from over the seas, lived through those thirteen historic days preceding the armistice. It will perhaps be worth the reader's while—I mean the nice, bright, perceptive reader's while—for mostly the throbbing, high-colored beauty of Alsace is veiled by dusty, argumentative, statistical pamphlets, so many of which are printed, so few of which are read. I once saw a great building full of such, and dozens of them were presented me for my sins, though I had never thought to read another book on Alsace, much less to write one. I see once again how

## PREFACE

foolish is the man or woman who says to the fountain, "I will never more drink of thy water."

In this record there are no polemics and no statistics. I have added nothing to each day's happenings, which run along as life is apt to run along, even in supreme moments, and, Heaven help me, I have concealed nothing. It is because of all this that perhaps those who, like myself, have wept much and laughed much in their lives, will not ungladly accompany me to a corner on the sorrowful and glorious chart of the autumn of 1918.

EDITH O'SHAUGHNESSY.

PARIS, 33 RUE DE L'UNIVERSITÉ,  
*February, 1919.*

ALSACE IN RUST AND GOLD



# ALSACE IN RUST AND GOLD

## I

### THE JOURNEY THERE

AND this is what a woman was thinking, as she walked the platform of the Gare de l'Est at seven o'clock on a foggy October morning of 1918, waiting to take the train to the front.

"Why, when trials and tribulations await us in every land, when every dearest affection is accompanied by its related grief and every achievement by the phantom of its early hope—why this illimitable ardor of the soul, pressing us forward into new combinations?" . . .

A few days before I had learned that Masevaux, the capital of that small triangle of Alsace, reconquered since the August of 1914, would be my journey's term. Looking in the guide-book, I found Masevaux at the very end—on page four hundred and ninety, to be precise, and the book has but four hundred and ninety-nine pages in all—and it had seemed far, far, and the world an immensity, with few corners for the heart. I have realized since that it was only the chill of the unknown into which I was to venture, drawn inevitably as steel to the magnet or the needle to the north, by that very ardor of the soul. . . .

## ALSACE IN RUST AND GOLD

I had not slept at all the night before—I never do when I am to take an early train to pass out into new ways—and the somewhat dispiriting influences of “that little hour before dawn” were still with me as I stepped into my compartment and took my seat, while a captain of dragoons lifted my small leather valise and my not large Japanese straw basket to the rack. Settling myself, a bit chilly, into the depths of my fur coat, slipped on over my uniform, I looked out upon the throng of officers and soldiers, as many Americans as French, perhaps even more.

Standing near my window was a blue-clad colonel, with many decorations and a black band on his arm. He was carrying a small bouquet of what seemed like wild-flowers, and he embraced in farewell a woman in deepest black who would bear no more children. . . .

Then a very young, crape-clad mother, carrying several pasteboard boxes, with three small children clinging to her skirts, hurried down the platform to get into a third-class compartment.

But with it all I was conscious that the blue and khaki war was receding, its strange deeds, which had seemed cut in such high relief, were even then blurred against the red background, the background itself fading. “Eyes look your last, arms take your last embrace” of the world horror, the world beauty, where sorrow has so often been above sorrow and where many “chariots have been burned to smoke.” . . .

In the compartment are five French officers with dark rings under their eyes. I don't know whether it is wounds or the effects of the *perm*.<sup>1</sup> Anyway, they almost immediately take attitudes inviting slumber. A young woman all in purple, whether third or fourth mourning I know not (it's well done, though it couldn't pass unnoticed), sits by one of the windows and waggles

<sup>1</sup> Permission.

## THE JOURNEY THERE

a short-vamped, very-high-heeled, bronze-shoed foot and rattles a gold vanity-box. From the neighboring compartment came classic expressions: "Can you beat it?" and "Search me." My heart salutes the Stars and Stripes. The whistle blows, and the train starts for the very end of the guide-book.

8.30.—Read the masterly editorial of Jacques Bainville in *L'Action Française*, "Où est le piège?" ("Where is the snare?") while going through the ugliest suburbs in the world, inclosing the most beautiful city in the world. And more beautiful than ever is Paris in uniform. Her delicate gray streets are mosaicked in horizon-blue, burnished with khaki, aglitter with decorations. (Oh, those men of the alert, expectant step, or those other broken ones dragging themselves along on canes and crutches!) Who has not seen Paris in uniform knows not her beauty, bright and terrible as an army in array; enchantment for the eye, bitter-sweet wine for the soul. And again, who has not seen her violet-nighted, black-girdled by the river, wearing for gems a rare emerald or ruby or sapphire light, and silent in her dark, enfolding beauty, knows her not. So lovers will remember her, and those whose sons are gone.

9.30.—Looking out of the window on fields and forests and groves. White-stemmed, yellow-leaved birches burn like torches in a pale, thin mist. The plowed fields are black with crows; it would seem to be a good year for them. We are due at Belfort at 3.35, but a large-paunched, very loquacious man blocking the corridor—his voice has not ceased since we started—tells a fellow-passenger that, with the delays caused by the shifting of troops and material, we'll be lucky if we get there by seven.

10.30.—Rampillon with its beautiful old church, having two rows of Gothic windows and several medieval

## ALSACE IN RUST AND GOLD

towers, seen from a foreground of smooth tilled fields. Over the green and yellow and brown world stretches a silver heaven, tarnished with yellowish-gray clouds.

*Longueville*.—Interminable trains of French and American troops cross one another. The French train has various barometrical indications of war-weather in chalk. *Guillaume, O là là, là là*; and the favorite and unrepeatable word — mingles with *Le plaisir d'aller à Paris, O les belles filles, Adieu à jamais, Boches*.

The cars containing American troops are inarticulate. They haven't been at it long enough to express themselves.

The handsome young officer next me opens conversation by asking me for my *L'Action Française*. Having previously torn out the article of Jacques Bainville, and wiped the windows with the rest, I pass it over to him with a smile. It wasn't tempting.

A group of Americans are standing in the corridor. I hear, "I'd like to burn the Rhine." And the answer: "I don't care what you burn, but I don't ever want to see the Statue of Liberty from *this* side again. Me for home. There's more in it in one week in the clinic in little old Chicago than here in a month, in spite of the hunks of material. Leaving some to die or bandaging men in a hurry that you'll never see again, and dead tired all the time. No, siree! No war thrills for me." And then, all being devotees of Esculapius, they fall to talking about diseases, civil as well as military.

The loquacious party (he hasn't stopped even to take breath) says to his companion that he's going to surprise his wife, who thinks he's in Paris. Whatever else she's enjoying, she must be enjoying the silence, and I do hope he'll make a lot of noise when he opens the door.

The young French officer next me with the *Légion d'Honneur, Croix de Guerre*, four palms and two stars,



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tells me he is with the Americans at Langres, which is *camouflé* these war-days as A. P. O. 714, the ancient hill-town of the Haute-Marne being the setting for the celebrated "University" of the A. E. F.

11 o'clock, Romilly.—Near here, in the old Abbey of Scellières, was buried Voltaire, *l'enfant gâté du monde qu'il gâta* ("spoiled child of the world that he spoiled"), having been refused ecclesiastical burial in Paris. And from here he journeyed in his dust to the Panthéon.

At St.-Mesmin the sun came out, and the dull, plowed fields were suddenly spread with great covers, as of old-gold velvet, tucked in about the slender feet of pine forests.

Now all this pleasant soil of France has many histories, and St.-Mesmin is where the priest Maximin (you see whence the name) was sent by the Bishop of Troyes to implore the mercy of Attila in favor of the great city. For answer the terrible king of the Huns put him to death. Against the sky is the tower of a twelfth-century church. A collection of objects in a field that I thought were plows turned out to be cannon.

Troyes.—Not a glimpse of the cathedral. Immeasurably long troop-train fills the station on one side of us. On the other a gorgeous (it's the only word for it) American Red Cross train. Pressed against the windows, lying or sitting, were pale men of my race. I waved and smiled, and languid hands went up in answer. The box cars on the other side were filled with blue-clad men. Over the doors were green boughs, on the sides chalked portraits of the Kaiser, *Dur à croquer, Mort à Guillaume*, etc. And everywhere the once so familiar *On les aura* is converted into *Nous les avons*.<sup>1</sup> Through the slits in the top of the cars were faces of *poilus* looking out, just as one sees cattle

<sup>1</sup>"We'll get them," and "we've got them."

## ALSACE IN RUST AND GOLD

looking out; then a long line of other box cars with American, khaki-capped heads also looking out of the slits in the top, while the side doors too were crowded with sitting, standing, leaning doughboys. Again I waved from my window, and every cap was lifted.

There was a young man standing at the door of some sort of a refrigerator car, and he wore a wonderful goat-skin coat. Being so near my window I spoke to him, and said:

"It's a fine coat you are wearing."

"I'll tell you in the spring," was the prompt answer. "They've just given them out to us. You try living next to the cold storage." He then proceeded to blow into some mottled fingers, after which he pulled a long tuft of hair from his coat. "I'm molting," he added, as he held it up, "and winter's coming."

And he didn't know whence he had come nor whither he was going. Then either his train moved or mine did—I couldn't tell which—and I saw him no more.

*Vandœuvres-sur-Barse.*—Wood, wood, piled high on every kind of wheeled thing. Forests from which it had been cut showing sharp and thin, fringing the gold-brown fields under the luminous noonday heaven. And here for a moment the green was so delicate and the yellow so tender, that I had a fleeting illusion of spring as I looked out.

Then I fell to talking with some young officers of the 131st Artillery from Texas, but nothing that I remember. They had made no impression on France, neither did France seem to have made any impression on them.

*Bar-sur-Aube.*—Old houses, old walls, blue hills, a white road leading over one of them. Strange church tower, with a round, many-windowed top, and in each window hangs an old bell. A great trainload of American infantry "going up," the station, too, flooded with khaki, and another train passed crowded with *poilus*

## THE JOURNEY THERE

evidently *en permission*, making rather fundamental toilets.

And around about Bar, as we slipped out, was a silver-vaulted world of terra-cotta and purple hills, green and brown fields, silver hayricks, silver sheep grazing near, and warm, brindled cattle, many green-painted beehives, and fruit trees trained against pink walls. Gentle slopes, later to become the Alps, appeared, and beech forests, like very worn India shawls, clung to them, and a row of nearby poplars had each its nimbus of yellow light.

About this time, having had a hasty cup of tea at six, I began to be so hungry that the luster went from the landscape and my eyes received nothing more. I didn't care whether the talkative man gave his wife a surprise or not, and the two Americans of the Texan Artillery section had long since also ceased to interest me, when I heard a "nosy" voice saying:

"Gosh! I tell you, boys, there's big money to be made over here after the war. All you have to do is to hang out the sign, 'American Dentist,' and your waiting-room 'll burst." I sat down and nearly slept by the side of the six-foot dozing handsome officer, with the beautiful blue uniform, and yellow pipings on his trousers and cap, and five service and three wound stripes, and the number 414 on his collar, besides a lot of decorations on his breast.

1.30, *Chaumont*.—Sitting in the dining-car, finishing an excellent lunch. Of course, in common with the rest of the world, I've heard a good deal about Chaumont, but I can say that on the word of honor of an honest woman the only thing I saw in khaki in that famous station of the A. E. F. Headquarters was an emaciated Y. M. C. A. man about five feet four inches high, with an umbrella and a straw basket.

Of course, I'm familiar with the phrases, "Chaumont

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has put its foot down," "Chaumont won't have it," "Everything will be decided at Chaumont"; and once, entering a Paris restaurant, I heard the words, "It's all Chaumont's fault."

Then the fog closed in, a thick, impenetrable fog, and that's all I know or ever will know of Chaumont, as I'm going back to Paris *via* Nancy. So be it.

On a nearby new railroad embankment, the figure of a *poilu*—the classic figure—the coat pinned back from his knees, bayoneted rifle over his shoulder, loomed up immeasurably large in the fog, while he watched the labors of a lusty, husky set of German prisoners, the familiar "P. G." <sup>1</sup> stamped on their backs. A little farther along was another laughing, rosy-faced group of four of the same, watched over by one of their own under-officers. I could only see his field-gray back stamped with his P. G., but as his men were so unrestrainedly hilarious, there is no reason to suppose that *he* was frowning.

4 o'clock, *Culmont-Chalindrey*.—Already three hours late. Fog-enveloped train of box cars filled with slightly wounded doughboys peering through the narrow slit at the top, bandaged eyes, noses, the same kind of groups looking out of the door. Suddenly everything seems dreary. I am tired, and wonder why, oh! why I came, and if the war is going to last forever and forever, and it is the hour of the day when those who have not slept the night before know profound discouragement and the noonday devil has ceased to walk, flicking his whip.

*Vitrey*.—Station full of Americans and wood—wood—wood, as if every tree in France had been cut. "Wood by the pound is how you buy it over here, all the same," disdainfully remarked the Minnesotan artilleryman serving in the Texan regiment, as we stood looking out of the window.

<sup>1</sup> *Prisonnier de Guerre* (Prisoner of War).

## THE JOURNEY THERE

And if the journey down seems long, remember that life, too, is made up of wearisome and long things—that it is indeed but a pilgrimage, and mostly through a land more desert than this of Burgundy.

And in the end this book may justify itself, though of that I know as little as you.

At Vitrey there is a detachment of mustard-tinted, khaki-clad, red-*chechiaed* Moroccan *tirailleurs*, exceedingly exotic-appearing, sitting on their accoutrement or leaning against the bare scaffolding of a new addition to the station. There came into my mind what an unwed friend told me of a conversation with a dying *tirailleur*, to whom she was giving a *tisane* in a long, dim, hospital room at two o'clock in the morning. He looked at her and said suddenly in his strange French: "Woman, I know thy look; thou and many like thee have not been embraced in love. In my village thou wouldst be a grandmother" (I had never thought of her as old, but the *tirailleur* knew that, as the men of his race rated women, she was old—old, and no one would have followed her to the well.) He continued: "If no man is to enfold thee, why not be as those of the great white coifs, who have given themselves to Allah? They have not thy look." Then he went into delirium and cried out in his own tongue and picked at his sheet, and when she came that way again he was dead.

6 p.m., Vesoul Station.—Writing by the light that comes in from the gas-jet. Dim American forms silhouetted in the great station. Partake of the loneliness that possesses the soul of American youth in France on a foggy autumn night. One of them said to me to-day, with a curious, dulled look in his eye, a brooding, neurasthenic eye, "I'm the kind that gets killed the last day of the war."

Then a presence apparent only by the light of his cigarette, a being with an accent not immediately place-

## ALSACE IN RUST AND GOLD

able, half cockney, half Middle-West, calls out, "Say, does anybody know when we pull into Belfort?"

It had, all the same, something of confidence-inspiring, so I briskly chirped up:

"Oh, in an hour or two or three."

"Well, I took the eight-o'clock train from Paris last night."

Chorus: "You mean this morning?"

"I mean last night, and going ever since."

"What have you been doing in between times?"

"Going, going," he answered, casually, "and as you see, going still!"

"How did you manage to get on this train?"

"I don't know. There I was and here I am, and God knows where my kit is. I'm a flier, and I've got to have my things," he ended, rather irritably, and then there was another conversation about "burning the Rhine."

After interminable hours—two of them—we came to Lure, and everybody seemed to be getting out, even the woman in purple, and there was a fumbling with pocket lamps and the voice of my country crying, "Where's that door—door, anyway?"

The young man who started last night came into my compartment as the train jerked out of the station, and he was a Canadian aviator *en route* for the big camp of the Royal Independent Air Corps at Chatenoir. Before the war he had been a chartered accountant. "But," he said, "once in the air, never again can I sit at a desk, crushed in by four walls." And he told stories of hair-breadth escapes of himself and his comrades, and of combats in the air—once he had had his knee broken—and then he suddenly cried out in a sharp voice: "God! I'm tired! Somebody let me know if we ever get there," and flung himself in a corner, and went to sleep, I hope.

A young American officer standing smoking in the corridor, with whom I had sat at lunch, turned on his

## THE JOURNEY THERE

pocket-lamp for an instant during the ensuing silence, and said, "Do you mind if I come in?" Then, in the pitch darkness, lighting one cigarette from the other, and very lonely, I think, he almost immediately began to talk about himself, and his story might be called the story of the young man who was and wasn't married.

Stripped of non-essentials, it was this: He had become engaged at a "co-ed." school, as he called it, some years before, and when he was drafted, in the possible event of his being ordered abroad, the twain decided to get married instead of waiting a few more years. One Sunday morning in November they hunted up a clergyman and the knot was tied. They then had lunch at the station and she took her train and he went back to his camp. She was an army nurse and he was in the Engineers.

Now, as inclination alone could have caused them to unite (there wasn't the ghost of another reason apparent; they hadn't even mentioned the matter to their families), the sequel of the story becomes somewhat interesting; in fact, quite incomprehensible, let us say, to the Latin; even I myself was a bit muddled as to the whereforeness of it all.

Well, to continue. The next time they meet is when Fate, not quite unmindful of them, sends him as instructor to a camp in the Middle West on the outskirts of the very town where her people live, and she goes to spend a three days' leave with them.

The not-too-eager and certainly not-over-inventive bridegroom (whatever combinations may have been in his mind, neither he nor history records) gets a few hours' leave and goes to spend Sunday at the home of his bride.

I begin to breathe. But not at all. Her people, innocent as the new moon of the marriage, ask a few neighbors in for lunch—to make it pleasant for them.

## ALSACE IN RUST AND GOLD

The bride was to return that very same afternoon to her hospital. They did walk to the station (under the same umbrella, I hope) and there they said good-by.

"It was what you might call a quiet wedding," I hazarded at this stage, and it was too dark to see if he caught the point. Please bear in mind that this was a marriage of inclination; no other explanation, I repeat, being possible. And the luncheon took place the end of January.

The next time the situation seems about to clear up is in the golden month of August, she having been transferred to the military hospital near the camp to which he, in the meantime, had been transferred as instructor. It seemed providential and again I breathe, thinking, "Love will find a way." Not at all. The bride rings him up the Sabbath morning after his arrival (Sunday is evidently a bad day for that young man) and tells him her orders take her to Camp Sill that night. The next day he gets orders to report for overseas duty, and here we sit in the dark, on the outskirts of Belfort! He breaks the silence later, with a certain eagerness in his voice (not, however, for his distant bride, who, I also gather, still bears her maiden name): "I do hope if we beat them I get a chance to go into Germany with the troops. I've wandered all my life [he's between twenty-five and thirty] and sometimes I wonder how I'll take to living in one place and bringing up a family."

In the dark I wondered, too.

*Later, much later.*—To-morrow, All Saints' Day, there will be some crowding of the heavens, and the day after, the Feast of the Dead, all France will be a-hurry-ing to her graves.



## II

ALL SAINTS' DAY, NOVEMBER, 1918

*EVENING.*—Masevaux, a town of old fountains and old inns with charming old signs hanging out, the pebbly Doller running through it under ancient, balconied houses, and over all hanging faint odors of its century-old tanneries. A long day, but not too long.

Punctually at eight-thirty I had descended the flashy stairway of the "Tonneau d'Or" at Belfort to find the officer sent to meet me finishing his coffee and reading the morning papers, always comforting these days.

In a thin fog, we start out of town, passing under the antique high wall of the castle against the rock of which "The Lion" has been carved. Now all has been done that it is humanly possible to do with granite and a lion, but of that more another time—perhaps. I can't stop now except to say that the hand that fashioned it fashioned also the Statue of Liberty in New York harbor.

We meet, just out of Belfort, a funeral procession—three coffins, two draped with the Tricolor, one with the Stars and Stripes. Making the sign of the cross, I commended three souls to Heaven. I always remember, accompanying a beloved one of my blood to his narrow dwelling, how sweet, how very sweet, it was to see the gesture of that sign, and the lifted hats of those we met, saluting him on his last journey. Though I do not care inordinately how or when or where I lose my flesh, that much I would like done to me—in passing.

## ALSACE IN RUST AND GOLD

Nestled in the corner of a broad, sloping field was a cemetery, a new cemetery, with French and American flags flying from its crowded graves, and many men were busy digging, and we heard the crunch of shovels in cold, gravelly earth as we passed, and yet I thought how well, how very well, the soldier sleeps! . . .

We were on the flat road that leads to Cernay, where the Germans have lain intrenched since the beginning of the war.

Shifting masses of horizon-blue, velvety in the thin mist, appear, disappear down white roads, between fields of barbed wire and against horizons of rusty beeches. In the villages black-robed women and children and old men are coming out of rose-colored churches or standing by elaborate, very decorative rose-colored fountains. There is the distant sound of cannon. It is again the front.

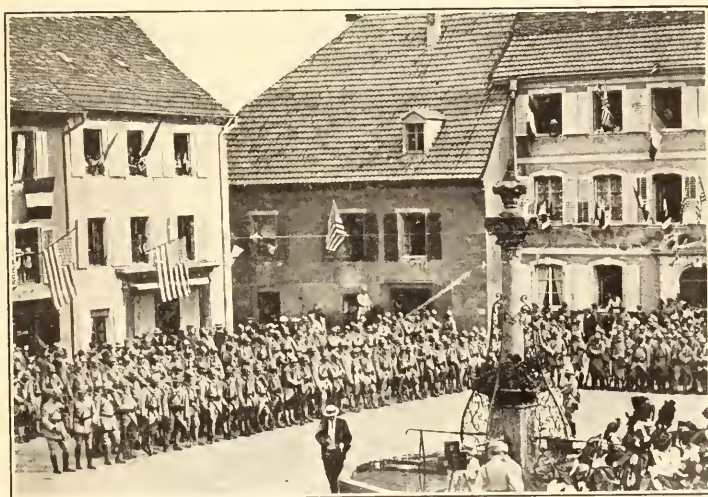
At Masevaux, I find myself drawing up under some yellowing lindens in front of the building of the Military Mission—once the German *Kommandantur*, in turn once the nave of the old church of the Abbey of Masevaux. I walk over a rich carpet of rustling leaves to the door, and am shown up the broad, stone stairway of an immaculately kept building.

Commandant Poulet having been called that morning to St.-Amarin, I am taken into a charming corner room hung with a wall-paper that might have been designed by Hansi, where a young, light-haired man with dark rings under his eyes, who knows both battles and desks, was sitting at a big table.

We looked at each other, I must confess, with some curiosity, though of the politest. I, to see what the Military Mission might be going to offer, but prepared to be very easily and very much pleased, he, doubtless, to see what had been "wished on" them for the next week. It *might* so easily have been awful, instead of



THE FOURTH OF JULY, 1918, IN ALSACE



PLACE DU MARCHÉ, MASEVAUX, JULY 14, 1918

[See page 24



## ALL SAINTS' DAY

a niceish lady who has both wept and laughed, and known many lands and many men. He asks me what I would like to do that morning. Not having the ghost of an idea what there is to do, I answer, "Everything is interesting," and give a somewhat free Gallicization of "beauty lieth in the eye of the beholder." This was received approvingly, even hopefully, and he tells me that in the afternoon I am to attend a ceremony in the military cemetery at Moosch, in another valley.

About this time I begin to remember that it is "La Toussaint," and I say that if possible I should like to go to church. This, too, is encouragingly easy and I am turned over to an officer whose wife and two children have been in Brussels for four years, he himself a deserter from the German army.

When we reached the church, built of *grès rose*, evidently and happily, from its abundance, the building stone of this colorful corner of the world, and which can take on the loveliest of *patines* in even a generation or two, I find it overflowing with the faithful, many blue men standing on its pink steps. The curé, followed, I hope, by his flock, was off on a longish sermon, and for a good half-hour I was washed and blown about on a sea of mixed metaphor, though it did not seem too long, for mind and imagination were flinging themselves about reconquered lands and border peoples, and I only really "came to," so to speak, when a great and splendid organ sounded and a deep, harmonious choir of men's voices joined it. Then I knew I was indeed on the frontier, where music lingers, and amorously it would seem, near the last of the mad, Romantic peoples.

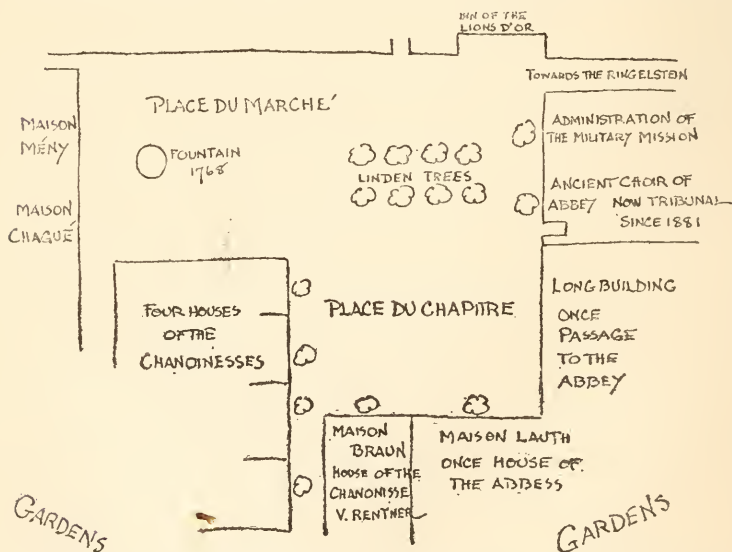
When we passed out there was the noise of guns and everybody was looking up at little white balls of shrapnel unrolling themselves about some black specks in the blue, blue sky. It was the familiar firing on German airplanes.

Then I was led to this charming old house, which is

## ALSACE IN RUST AND GOLD

one of six placed at right angles, on two sides of the Place du Chapitre. It proved to be part of the old convent, done over by Kléber when he cultivated the arts of peace rather than those of war. It belongs to four agreeable sisters, the Demoiselles Braun, whose brother, also a deserter from the German ranks, was killed in Champagne. They were rehangng the portraits of their ancestors.<sup>1</sup> Whereby hangs the tale of two American nurses who, quartered there some weeks before, had left the water running in the tub one night, after which the drawing-room ceiling fell in and the paper peeled in hall and vestibule. Hence the rehangng of the ancestors, at their own, I mean the sisters', expense.

They take me up a beautiful, but very worn, stairway, with a time-polished oaken balustrade, and I find myself in a paneled room, looking out on the square shaped like this:



<sup>1</sup> NOTE.—As far back as the end of the sixteenth century, there is, in the annals of Masevaux, mention of the tanneries of the Braun family.

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Many motors are drawn up in front of the Mission under the yellowing lindens. The old red inn of "Les Lions d'Or" is directly opposite, and on the left of the square at right angles with me are the four other houses once dwelt in by the *chanoinesses* when it was decided that each should have her own establishment. The square is roughly, anciently paved, with grass growing in between the cobblestones, and Mademoiselle Braun, who showed me to my room, told me the steps of the old stairway were so uneven because after the Revolution (during which the Chapter had been dispersed) the house was long used as a school and they had been worn by generations of young feet running up and down.

At 12.15—I am conveyed to *la popote*<sup>1</sup> for luncheon. More officers inspect me—I them also—and then we proceed to the consuming of an excellent meal, to the very exhilarating accompaniment of the news of the capitulation of Turkey, and a light, easy touching on other prospective and pleasant changes.

Now as, owing to circumstances too long to enter into, I hadn't eaten since noon the day before, passing by Chaumont, I did full justice to a rabbit white as snow, garnished with noodles of the same hue, flooded by a delicious golden sauce. I only fleetingly remembered that I ordinarily avoid the little beast as food; for dessert we had a great cake filled with chocolate and whipped cream, such a one as I had not seen for many a month and year. A bottle of champagne was opened in joy at the Turkish news. And we drank to everything and to everybody—even to the health of the "Sick Man of Europe," not, however, sicker than several others at that moment, as some one cheerfully added. It was all very pleasant, and I felt that everything was for the best in the best of war worlds.

At 2.30 I start out with Captain Tirman over a

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<sup>1</sup>Officers' mess.

## ALSACE IN RUST AND GOLD

smooth road, *camouflé*, kilometer after kilometer, with screens of wire netting interwoven with broom and pine branches, for the road runs along the side of hills which slope down to the valley where the Germans lie entrenched. Everywhere are shell-holes, new and old. We stopped on a high place and, getting out, peered through a hole in the screen. Spread out before my eyes was the rich plain of Alsace, one of the world's gardens. Something crystal and shimmering half veiled its loveliness, but its beauty and richness I knew for the beauty and the richness of a thousand years of blood, and many men had found it fair and panted for its beauty and died for it.

In the distance, very white and shining, were the chimneys of Mulhouse, and a pale-blue line against the horizon was the Black Forest. All the time there was the sound of cannon, ours and theirs, reverberating through the hills. I was greatly moved, and started to go higher up in the field, but Captain Tirman stopped me, saying: "It will be better for you to get away with your souvenirs than to take them unrecorded with you to the grave. The Boches shell anything they see; and we haven't got our masks, either, in case they send a gas-bomb."

The roadsides were planted with cherry trees, scarlet-leaved, the *kirschbaum* of Alsace. The hills had great patches of velvety, rust-colored beeches; dark pines traced black patterns through them, yellow larches shone here and there like torches; a soft sun was dispersing the last of the delicate, noonday mists.

Then we slipped into the valley of the Thur, where lies the ancient town of Thann. From afar I saw the lacy, gray belfry of its cathedral, pressed against other heights of velvet rust and burnished gold. Nearby, the hill of the Engelburg, with its broken, overturned tower like a great ring, a souvenir of Turenne's campaign



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during the Thirty Years' War, was soft and lovely, too. The long street was sun-bathed, and filled with the black-bowed peasants of story-books, and the blue soldiery of the great war. I wanted to stop by a pink fountain, near the richly carved portal of the cathedral, but we feared to be late for the ceremony at Moosch and hurried on.

At a place called Bitschwiller, however, we were obliged to wait while an almost endless procession of black-clad old men, women, and children, and blue-clad soldiers wound across the road, from its pink church to the distant green and yellow cemetery.

Furthermore, the Fifteenth New York Infantry—black, black, black—is quartered at Bitschwiller, and the most exotic sight I have ever seen were those khaki-clad negroes in that valley, already very high-colored.

Suddenly against the steep hill, like a picture slightly tilted back, we came in sight of the square cemetery of Moosch.

Above and below it was framed by a line of helmeted men in khaki, and as we neared I saw they were *our* black troops; the horizon-blue of a French infantry regiment made the frame at the two sides. High, high up were a group of white- and black-gowned priests, and red- and white-gowned acolytes swinging their censers. At the top of the steep stairway, running down the middle of the black-crossed cemetery, was a sacerdotal figure, with outstretched arms, exhorting, and around about the whole were groups of women and children. We left the motor and walked over to the cemetery, where I found myself standing near the resting-place of Norman Hall, the first American to die in Alsace. From the tall, black cross floats the Stars and Stripes, and some one had planted chrysanthemums thick on his grave. Peace to him. He lies not far from General Serret, who fell, too, on the nearby

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sacrificial Hartmannswillerkopf, where commingled lie fifty thousand who at the word of command had put out each other's light.

After the sermon the negro band of the Fifteenth played some grave and measured music, the French infantry band then something a little too gay. As one of the officers said afterward, "*Cela a presque frisé la polka.*"

Then the "Marseillaise" sounded and "The Star-spangled Banner." I felt my veil wet against my eyes and my lips atremble as I thought, a second time that day, how well, how very well, the soldier sleeps.

Above the cemetery in a higher contour of eternal hill was a great patch of yellow and black and rust-colored forest against a clear blue-white sky, in which tiny black specks were moving eastward.

We waited to watch the negro troops defile. They appeared very smartly dressed till the eye got to their feet, and such a collection of ripped, torn, cut, down-at-the-heel footgear was never seen! They seem to be a flat-footed race, too. I spoke to a couple of darkies very much *en repos*, who were leaning against a fence, near the motor, as I got in.

One answered, with a broad grin, "You an American from America?"

"Yes."

"Well, have you heard dis here war's about over?" The coalest-black one then contributes this to the conversation:

"When peace is signed dis here nigger starts to walk home."

"What about the ocean?"

"I'll take a swim, lady; the water can't be no colder and no damper dan dis here 'Alice' land."

The mulatto by his side said, "I subscribes," and became a pale gray at the bare idea of getting colder or damper.

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Then we see Commandant Poulet, tall, blue-clad, with high decorations ashine, coming toward us, and he and many officers are presented to me, after which I change into his motor, and we start out over a magnificent military road built since the war. It was begun and completed almost miraculously, it would seem, in little more than a year, and over it, safely hidden from German guns, come and go the great military supplies of the Alsatian front—troops, artillery, munitions, food, ambulances.

As we mount, mysterious, dissolving twilight views present themselves near red cherry trees, burn against distant blue hills, yellow larches illuminate other "hill-tops hearsed with pines," and the beech woods are a deep, deep purple. Then we plunge into the dimness of the great cedar forests of the Route Joffre, talking, but not too much, in the large, enfolding twilight, of the war, and of Alsace of to-day. Commandant Poulet has been in charge of the Military Mission since Christmas Day of 1914, and I thought, rolling over the broad road, contemporaneous with his administration, how out of thousands, nay millions of men, his part during these war years had been to construct and not destroy. He told me that almost his first official act was to be present at the burial of Norman Hall on December 26, 1915.

As we issue from the dark forest we find ourselves on a crest overlooking many other twilit hills. There is a pale, pale yellow still burning in the west, and the most timid of evening stars shines above it. Then we dip into the deep blue valley where Masevaux lies.

Peasants are hurrying to their villages, and there is a continuous, but dull, sound of cannon. In the chill of the fallen night we arrive at the Place du Chapitre, the town dark, dark as we enter it, and no light in any house. Having seen my pleasant room only in daytime, I proceeded in hunting for the light to try to turn on

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a barometer, then by another door feeling my way along, I fumbled about an arrangement of mandolin and pipe, then, as a last resort, I sought light from a stuffed owl. After which I went into the corridor and, re-entering the room, found the electric button just where it ought to be—by the door.

A saving hour of solitude before I am fetched for dinner, which was very pleasant, but I can't tell about it now, for sleep, dear sleep, is touching me, and it is two days and a night since it has been near.

### III

FÊTE DES MORTS, NOVEMBER, 1918

CHURCH again, seemingly in company with the entire population, civil and military, after which I *flanéd* in the old streets of Masevaux, word having been brought that no motor was available for our projected trip to Dannemarie. Indeed, I had early noticed from my window much mounting in hot haste, accompanied by the lively sound of two kinds of firing. Some *coup de main*, I suppose.

I strolled about under an uncertain sun, occasionally sensible of that delicate, not unpleasant smell of bark and leather hanging on a windless air. About me was that world of blue-clad soldiers, black-robed women, and many children were playing in the pink and gray streets; a group of little girls were skipping rope to the words *ein, zwei, drei, quatre, cinq, six!*

The post-office of modern Teutonic origin still wears, high up and indifferently, the Double Eagle, though the more accessible *Kaiserliches Post-Amt* has been removed. A little farther down the street is the old inn of the "Golden Eagle" whose historic sign dates from Napoleonic days, and which, as was pointed out to me, turns its golden back disdainfully to the black, double face of the once proud eagle of the post-office.

And this inn of the "Golden Eagle" hangs its charming sign out on a corner of the square called "La Halle aux Blés" (the Grain Market), surrounded by sloping-roofed, roomy houses. In the center is a rose-colored

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fountain, with three diminishing rose-shaped basins around a carved central column.

And the cobblestoned square with its good fountain and its comfortable houses—there's even a stable and a garage on one side—has something cozy about it, its atmosphere that of a place long used by human beings for the homelike customs of "the simple life," which last bears no resemblance to that occasionally practised at great expense and inconvenience by those who "need a change" and can afford one.

American troops passed through the Halle aux Blés on the 30th of May of this year, again on the 4th of July, and on the 14th, too, always drawing themselves up at last in the Place du Marché, one end of which is my Place du Chapitre. There, under the lindens, General Hahn and General Boissoudy watched them deploy, while gaily attired Alsatian girls grouped about the fountain acclaimed them, and from every window hung the Stars and Stripes.

Then I found myself wandering out on the road to Belfort, past the high, grassy eminence known as the "Ringelstein," once crowned by the proud castle of Duke Mason, founder of Masevaux. Traces of ancient walls embowered in ivy are still to be seen, and at its base are many old outbuildings of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, once dependencies of the Abbey and the Chapter, and when you are not expecting it you find old inscriptions and bits of carving plastered into them. On one high-roofed outhouse was a large crown and three fleurs-de-lis. Blasted through one end of the great rock of the Ringelstein runs the railway. And there is a near view of the red and green and yellow roofs of the houses of the *chanoinesses* confounding themselves with the autumn foliage of the trees which embower them.

I begin to know a little of the early history of Mase-

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vaux, enveloped in legends and many contrary tales—Masevaux, ruled now by abbots, now by feudal lords, belonging sometimes to the House of Austria, sometimes to the House of France.

And the first legend is that of its foundation. How the lord of the country, by name Mason, a nephew of Saint-Odile, was feasting in his castle of this same Ringelstein, and the wines of Burgundy and Alsace and of the Rhine were flowing, and a troubadour was reciting a tale of war and love, when suddenly Duke Mason cries out:

“Soul of my soul, misfortune is happening to my son! Night is falling. Where is he?” And he goes to the window and looks out. Some one answers:

“Fear not, illustrious father of so dear a child. He has doubtless tarried with the holy fathers of Moutiers.” But the night gets blacker, the lords and ladies drop their golden hanaps and the troubadour is still.

Then Mason, in the grip of deeper presentiment, cries out, “Who loves me to the succor of my son!” And they seek with torches for the child. Alas! the white body of Mason’s son, born of a dead, beloved wife, is found floating upon the little stream, and Mason, pressing what was once his child to his heart, cries out: “Nothing can ever give me joy again. I will build a monastery wherein to pass my days until God calls me from this heavy world.” And that is the origin of Masevaux—Masmunster. The legend has it, too, that on moonless nights the child returns, weeping, because he did not live long enough to read all the beautiful stories inscribed by the gods, the prophets and the wise, concerning the sons of men. And as I looked up at the great grass- and vine-covered rock whereon the castle of Mason once rose, the Doller flowing at its base, the cannon of the great war sounded. Down the white road was disappearing a battalion of blue-clad men,

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going toward the black and rust and yellow of the hills—a red cherry tree between me and them. Then I turned back into the town and hied me to the *popote*, where some half-dozen extremely agreeable men were awaiting me, as well as a sustaining repast.

The American *communiqué* was immediately and very appreciatively read out. Our victorious advance was continuing along the Meuse (known as the "Muse" by the doughboy), the First American Army attacking on the west bank in liaison with the Fourth French Army on the left. Then we looked over the Turkish armistice terms, quite satisfyingly comprehensive from the opening of the Dardanelles to promises on the part of the Turks not to speak to any of their former friends.

And we talked of how from the terrace of Versailles, where the German Empire was proclaimed, the statesmen of the world will watch the twilight descending upon Walhalla and its gods; and here in Alsace the crash of falling temples can be heard.

After lunch I went with Lieutenant Lavallée to see a bit of Alsace from within, for he was to invite various mayors of villages to go to Paris for the "Fêtes Alsaciennes," to be held the middle of November, and also to select a discreet number of veterans of 1870 and school-children of 1918 to accompany them.

We went first to Gewenheim, a somewhat war-battered village and, as we entered it, Lavallée pointed out the iron plate on the sign-post, indicating the name of the village and the department. Like many others of the Haut Rhin (Upper Rhine), after 1870 it had been quite simply turned and marked in German. This proved most convenient and economical, for all the French Military Mission had to do when they came to Alsace in 1914 was to turn them back as they had been before 1870!

The mayor's house, one of the usual dwellings with a



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small door for humans and a big door for harvests, had been much damaged. Passing in through a sagging entrance, we found the mayor, the classic, horny-fisted, wrinkle-faced mayor of a village, with cobwebs and straw and other substances adhering to his coat, but possessed of a certain air of dignity and authority notwithstanding. There was a moment's silence after the lieutenant gave him the invitation, pride visibly wrestling with parsimony, accompanied by the working up and down of a very prominent Adam's apple. He accepted finally with a sort of "I am a man" expression, but there was a quite apparent melting of his being when he found that it was the State that would defray expenses. Then the wife of his bosom, who had helped him make and save his money, came in and showed us some of their "best" shell-holes, and a statue of the Virgin of Lourdes under a large glass bell which had not a scratch, even, though everything around had been shattered.

There was also a lithograph of Henner's red-headed "Alsatian Girl," who hangs in every home and every railway station, and is used for loans and appeals and calendars and advertisements of complexion washes and hair-dyes; and she was once a charming creature, before familiarity bred contempt.

The worthy couple then fell to a discussion in Alsatian German as to which of the veterans would be possible candidates for the trip to Paris. There seemed to be something the matter with every one mentioned. Rudler, Franzi, was nice and it was a pity that his rheumatism prevented his getting about, as he had lost his dung-heap, though not his house, in a recent bombardment and needed distraction. It wasn't quite clear to me *how* you *could* lose a possession of that kind, but I wasn't at the front to ask questions, so I let it pass.

Handrupp, Hansi's, eyes were giving him trouble. If he went, a boy would have to go to lead him about,

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and, even so, would he be welcome in Paris if it were known that his daughter, old enough to know better, had run away with a German?

First names, it will be noticed, came last, and last names first, a relic of German order. Another incautious but evidently esteemed veteran, by name Bauer, Seppi, had fallen from a hayrick last summer and would never walk again. It was like looking at the back of the web of Fate, and I found myself wondering with somewhat of exasperation, "for this had a hero's death at Gravelotte or Villersexel or Saint-Privat been denied him, where angels would have awaited his strong, young body to take it to the heaven of those who die for country?" Suddenly the *dulce et decora* of so dying was quite clear to me, and Bauer, Seppi, who fell from the hayrick last summer, and all his still extant contemporaries, had the tragic part—as would these men of the great war some forty or fifty years hence, who were now going about with an astonished yet proud consciousness that, *ex millibus*, they had been chosen and been spared.

But as Lavallée very justly remarked, "What would happen to the world if everybody died young?" I suppose he is right, and I bethought myself that there are those who must await threescore and ten before the reasons for their having been born are apparent; the "Tiger," for instance, and Moses, and many others.

We then visited the curé, living at the very end of the village toward the lines. He was called from the church where he was hearing confessions, and Lavallée proceeded to ask him which of the schoolboys he recommended; wideawake ones, without, of course, being obstreperous, were wanted. Something, disappearing almost as swiftly as it came, passed over the curé's face. It was a look of sudden, nearly overwhelming desire to go himself, and the immediate realization of the impossibility of that or anything else that meant change.

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On the round center-table was a book, *Deo Ignoto*, and *L'Echo de Paris*. A little harmonium with manuscript-music on its rack was near the bed; on the walls were shiny lithographs of three popes, and an illuminated Lord's Prayer in German. As the upper rooms of the house were "unhealthy," on account of the raids and bombardments, the curé lived and breathed and had his being downstairs in this one room, with a rather boisterous yellow dog that kept sniffing at my gaiters. He was a large man, with a naturally masterful eye, who would have been at home in many places, occupied with many things, but he had lived, and would die, Curé of Gewenheim. And he at least owed the Germans a temporary widening of his activities, for Gewenheim is but three kilometers from the firing-line.

Then we crossed the muddy street to the schoolhouse to confer with the nuns concerning little girls, and were greeted by a dark-eyed, sparkling-faced Sister, very gifted by nature, who would have graced any drawing-room. There was something of elegance even in the way she had the washing of the stairs cease to allow us to pass up, and in the way she removed piles of coarse linen from the chairs in the room to which she conducted us. Then another Sister, not so bright, though she evidently ranked the gifted one, came in, and together they pondered the names of possible little girls. I had a feeling of being behind the scenes, and recognized how orderly and reasonable is the working of a so-often fortuitously appearing Fate, as they decided who should, or should not, take the journey to Paris. I thought, too, that it would have been well-nigh intolerable to me, had I been a little girl in Gewenheim, not to be among those chosen to go. But there was no longing on either of *their* faces. Especially the charming one radiated happiness and content. And how true that nothing can enter the heart that is not already there! I wondered

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if I, to whom so much of life is known—its glories and its miseries—possessed what that graceful woman had found in the dullest routine of duty imaginable. *She* knew whither she was bound, also whence she had come. In comparison, shaking, shifting, uneasy, appeared the compass of my life. . . .

A bottle of quite sour white wine was produced and they watched Lavallée and myself drink; no escape possible.

They are of the Sisters of the Divine Providence with their mother-house at Ribeauville, who have taught in the schools of Alsace for generations.

After leaving them, we visited the inn, entering into the *Gastzimmer* through a tiny antechamber of a shop, where thread and candles and oil for lamps, socks, and a few other strict essentials were sold. The black-toothed, thin-haired landlady, Tritter by name, might have been of any age, but a handsome boy of fifteen or thereabouts, with a bad cough, calling her "Mother," gave a possible limit. A good-looking, high-complexioned girl appeared breathless from a bethumbed back door, arranging two little curls under her ears. After the greetings, Lieutenant Lavallée said:

"Have you had any news of your daughter Odile?"

"Not since last winter from Colmar," both mother and sister answer; "the parcels we sent her, they cost each fifteen francs, have not been received. She was hungry when she wrote."

Then was poured out a confused story concerning the capture of a squad of Germans with their gun, in the autumn of 1914. A few days after the event the sisters had been standing in the street in front of their door, when a German officer came up and said to Odile, the younger:

"You are wanted for a moment." She followed him to another officer on horseback, waiting in a field. They had not seen her since. Then it appeared that it was the

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baker's wife who through jealousy had denounced the pretty Odile (the rôle of the baker himself was not indicated), but such an expression of hatred for the baker's wife, rather than for the Germans, came over the mother's visage that I was reminded of faces in pre-Raphaelite pictures—I mean those on the goat side in Judgment Day scenes. It was evidently one of those obscure yet ruthless village tragedies set in the frame of equally ruthless war.

When we came out we copied an old inscription over the house door of a man, Louis Vogler by name, who, returning from a campaign, had been decorated with the Legion of Honor in 1816, and had recorded the fact for all time over his door, his decoration even being carved in with the rest.

Evidently a man who, having done a deed, was not content that it should be writ only in water (or blood), but had it put squarely and clearly over the door of the house to which he returned; and was he not justified? For here it is being recorded some hundred years after, instead of having been carried away on the great river of Napoleonic deeds.

Then, through several wet villages, groups of girls with their felt slippers stuck into their clacking wooden sabots (very comfortable footgear, it appears) pass groups of blue-clad soldiers, and words are exchanged. I couldn't hear, but by the looks accompanying them and the giggles I judged them to be the eternal words exchanged in all ages between soldiers and future mothers of the race. And there is a verse, old as the army, which runs:

*Le négligent troupiér  
Qui laisse passer l'heure  
Et trop longtemps demeure  
Sera puni par son sous-officier.<sup>1</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup> And the forgetful trooper  
Who lets the hour pass  
And dallies too long, alas!  
Will be punished by his under-officer.

## ALSACE IN RUST AND GOLD

Everywhere along the road, through the mist, detachments of blue-clad men would appear and disappear. I thought with a touch of sadness, an esthetic sadness, to be sure, that this extreme beauty of dissolving distances would be lost when the world of blue-clad men would have disappeared, replaced by men in shabby, nondescript, civilian clothes, or by *des types à melon ou à tube*—those wearing derby hats or cylinders.

Near Rodern, between some lines of poplars, a helmeted cavalryman, with his detachment, rode by on a great black horse. He was bending slightly forward, his lance in his hand, his eyes looking straight ahead, his ample, light-blue tunic almost concealing his saddle. He was a pure French type, pale of face, with black hair, black mustache, slanting nose, and I knew him for the archetypal Gallic warrior as he has appeared through the ages, making epics for France.

At Bourbach-le-Haut, Lieutenant Lavallée was to invite a last mayor to partake of the trip to Paris, and hunt up some remaining veterans. Whatever gentle thirst I had had for mayors and veterans being now quite slaked, I went to the little church, instead of to the *Mairie*. Through the half-open door came light and chanting sounds. I went in to find a dim interior, with an ancient arch framing the altar space, in front of which was a narrow, black coffin. Only some very old bit of mortality, waxy and shrunken, could lie within. Women, children, and what may have been veterans were saying the rosary in German—the Sorrowful Mysteries—and I thought on my dead, and on that dear and holy brother born into the world on this day long years ago. In Alsace he had desired and received, dreaming and adolescent, the baptismal waters.

Sadness invaded me, even as the dreary night was invading the day, and I would have groaned aloud, but I saw Lieutenant Lavallée standing by me. Haunted by

## FÊTE DES MORTS

the mournful chanting, with its mysterious indications, "*Jetzt und in der Stunde unseres Absterbens, Amen,*" I passed out into falling night and rain; dark masses of mountain loomed up, lighter spaces were the stretching valleys. Soon we found ourselves on the deep road to Masevaux, I lonelier than the loneliest of the dark and hurrying clouds.

## IV

### THANN AND OLD THANN

**S**UNDAY MORNING, *November 3d.*—Awakened at six by heavy firing. After wondering what could be happening, I remember that life, as far as I am concerned, is for the moment largely joy, or rather joyous riding, with a series of agreeable French officers (they certainly are of an amiability!), in a series of large, powerful military motors, through a series of beautiful autumnal hills, over a series of the newest and most wonderful of war roads.

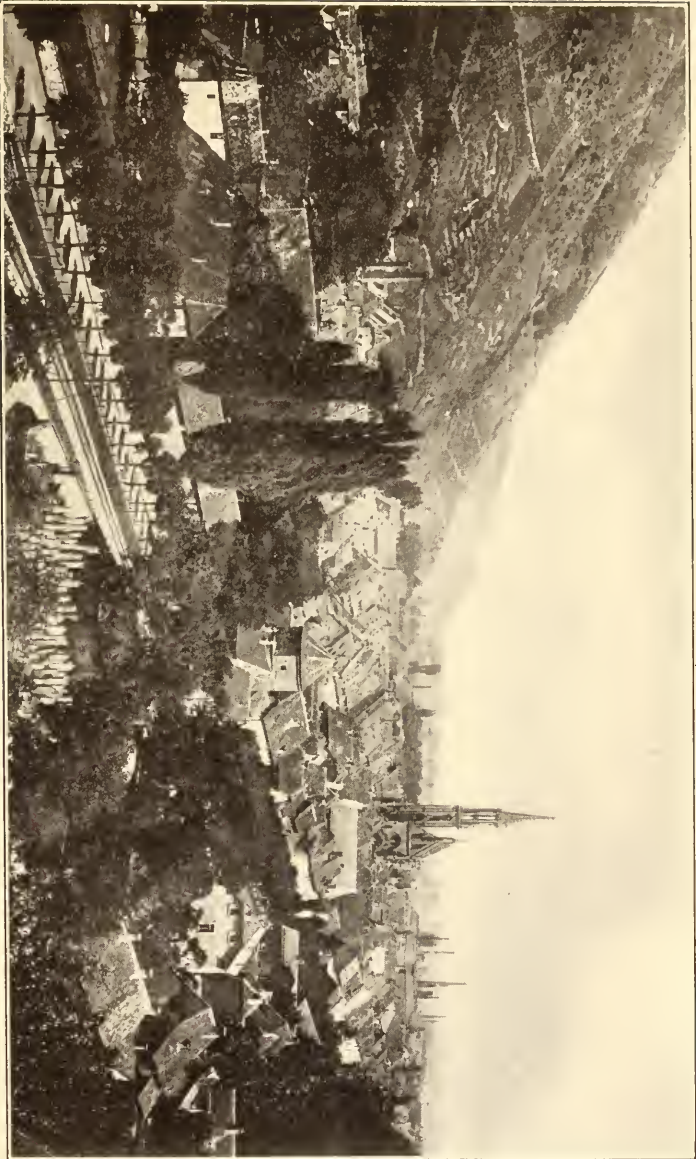
Enough church-going, however, as will have been noticed, to keep me mindful that man, and woman, too, is grass, and though it, or rather she, springs up in the morning, she may be cut down by night, and that this bending of the hills is by the journeys of her eternity.

Well, to get to the point, or rather to Thann. We started out early, at nine, for I was to find a Mass in the cathedral, after which we were to proceed to Vieux Thann, where war has not spared the church nor left worshipers.

Again we took the screened road overhanging the valley. Again we stopped on an eminence and climbed into a field, and again I was shown the blue valley, over the tops of some red cherry trees. Nothing detached itself from gradations of velvety mists and beaming distances, but I knew that on the grape-planted slopes of an unseen river that other wine of defeat was being drunk from cups held stiffly to unwilling lips.



THANN AND ITS VINEYARDS





## THANN AND OLD THANN

As we dipped down into the valley of the Thur, the belfry of the church of Thann appeared, so mistily, lacy soft that its form and substance seemed but as something breathed into the air, at any moment to be dissolved, against hills that were like brocaded stuffs, whose gold would be very thick if one turned them wrong side out. My heart was stirred because of the fairness of the Sabbath world.

We drew up in front of the gorgeous portal of the cathedral, once a deep pink, but with time grown paler and softer at all its edges, and whose boardings and sandbags now partly hide the carved story of the life of Christ and His Mother. We grope our way in through several swinging doors, and find the high, Gothic space filled with a misty yellow light coming in through narrow windows, covered with oiled paper, the precious stained-glass having been long since removed.

Little by little the forms of kneeling women and children, and many soldiers standing, detach themselves from the lovely gloom. The green vestment of the priest at the altar, on which are six tall, crystal, wide-branched candelabra, misty like the rest, is the only spot of color, for the splashes of horizon-blue become nearly white after a strange fashion of this color in dim light, whether of church or falling night. In the ancient wrought-iron pulpit the curé was just finishing a sermon in French, immediately beginning one in German. It appears that as the *communiqués* improve, the French sermon gets longer, and the German shorter, and mercifully neither is long.

We passed out quickly after the "*Ite, missa est.*" I had been feeling that Captain B—— might be in a hurry, but when I looked about to see if he were fidgeting, I found him doing what any *miles gloriosus* should be doing from time to time, saying his prayers.

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And this is the story of the building of the church of Thann, and of its arms, which bear a single pine tree.

Death found the holy Bishop Théobald in the Umbrian Valley, and, knowing that his hour had come, he said to his servitor Maternus, who knelt weeping by his side:

“Thou knowest I leave no worldly goods, for the poor have needed what I had. But this sapphire ring, dear memory of her once loved, take it, thou, that worms may not dwell within it.” And then he entered into contemplation, saying nothing further of the things of earth.

When Maternus had made ready to hide his master's body from the light, he tried to take the ring from its finger. But with the ring came the finger, and both were inclosed as in a shining rim.

Maternus, greatly wondering, hid the precious relic in a hollow place in his staff and started back to Alsace, begging his bread along the way. After many delays, having been set upon by wicked men and molested by prowling animals, he finally arrived in the valley of the Thur.

Exhausted, he laid himself down to rest, placing against a pine tree the precious staff. The next morning he was awakened by the ringing of the Angelus, and when he started to grasp his staff he found that it was as if grafted on to the great pine, while to left and right were burning two tall, pale, sapphire flames.

At this moment the lord of the Engelburg came by, the ruins of whose great castle are those one sees rising above the town of Thann. He had perceived the two blue flames from afar and, hastening to find out what they signified, he recognized Maternus, faithful servitor of his friend Théobald.

Maternus then related the death of the saint in the Umbrian plain, showing him the finger and the ring; whereupon the lord of the Engelburg, weeping and sighing, cried:

## THANN AND OLD THANN

“Oh! my precious friend Théobald; oh! my dearly loved sister Adelaide, this is thy betrothal ring, and these two sapphire flames announce thy union in dear heaven!” (In those days they were quick to see divine meanings.)

Now, the so well-loved Adelaide, in her green youth, had been struck by a bolt from heaven, after which Théobald, for whom the whole round earth held nothing more of value, had consecrated himself to God.

The lord of the Engelburg, his gaze fixed upon the luminous finger and the familiar blue ring, knew soon the too often hidden will of God, and cried out again:

“Here I will build a church, and its reliquary shall contain this precious ring and finger.”

And so was built the church and monastery of Thann, and about them grew the town, and during long centuries on the vigil of the feast of Saint-Théobald, a freshly cut pine tree was placed in front of the cathedral, flanked by two great wax candles. Nor can any one, even of the very positive-minded, who look no farther than stones and mortar for all meanings, give a better reason for the arms of Thann.

Then we motored on toward Vieux Thann, half destroyed, and evacuated since 1914, but were obliged to leave the too visible motor on the outskirts of the village, creeping close along a very high screen of wire and broom branches that we might not be seen by the enemy. For we were in the plain of Cernay, now known as the Ochsenfeld, once called the “Field of Lies,” where the three sons of Louis le Débonnaire routed their father’s army. Lothair, Louis, and Pépin were their names. But of all this another time.

Vieux Thann is a half-demolished, echoing, empty town, with a background of neglected vineyards on very close-pressing hills.

Everywhere were signs of German war occupation.

## ALSACE IN RUST AND GOLD

The schoolhouse had been their evacuation hospital, and one of the old inns bore the sign, "Verband-Station." The only living things in Vieux Thann were the fountains, quite lovely in the pink-stoned, gracious Alsatian way, with their gentle, unhurried streams of crystal water. It all reminded me vaguely of Pompeii, even in the misty light of a northern Indian summer sun.

Above, in the perfect blue, the usual firing on German airplanes was going on. Long after the black specks had disappeared to the east the little, round, soft, compact balls of shrapnel were still slowly unfolding themselves.

About fifteen hundred feet from us were the battle-lines, where the French and Germans have faced each other in the "Field of Lies" since 1914.

One of the battered inns, "Zum Goldenen Lamm," has its once lovely old sign still hanging out, but the golden lamb is gone, and only his golden feet and the green wreath of laurel that once entwined him remain.

And to what winds had the dwellers of the great village been scattered? Where had they been received, unwillingly, by strangers, those hosts of refugees, fleeing from their homes, red with excitement, bright-eyed, voluble? I've seen them, too, after months of treading up another's stairs and eating of the salt bread of charity—pale, silent, dispirited, returning to villages like Vieux Thann, to see their all among disorderly piles of fallen stones and crumbling mortar. . . .

Back to the living city, to an increasing sound of cannon, but the Sabbath stillness was so deep nothing seemed really to disturb it.

The cathedral with its single, finely pointed tower was like a needle everywhere threading up long streets. I had a desire to see it empty, and as I entered, its perfect proportions gave me a sweet and satisfying welcome. The red lamp of the sanctuary was now the only

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spot of color in the thick yellow gloom, out of which line and proportion gradually detached themselves. The celebrated choir-stalls had been removed to Sewen, but above the altar of the Virgin is a Gothic triptych, and the beautiful pulpit is of fifteenth-century wrought-iron. We groped our way into a low, vaulted chapel which existed even before the church was built, passing a tombstone bearing the arms of the house of Ferrette, a family once all-powerful in these valleys. Over the altar of the chapel is an ancient statue of Saint-Théobald. He has a long, thin, shaven, upper-class face, his eyes are bent, and he is looking perhaps as he did shortly before death found him in the Umbrian Valley. It is the visage of a man having done with personal things, and a great pity is woven into the downward curves of the benignant face.

We drove back to Masevaux, over one of the splendid new war roads, rising and dipping through forest-covered hills. The brilliant sun shone athwart each leaf, still dewy and sparkling, and a strong, rich, autumnal smell exuded from the earth. It reminded Captain Bernard of hunting before the war, that carefree *chasse d'avant-guerre*, and I thought of Hungarian castles, and long days in forests, walking through rustling leaves, or sitting silently in glades with men in green-brown hunting garb, awaiting the game. In the evening, shining dinner-tables, and talk about the day's bag by men in pink hunting-coats and women wearing their best gowns and all their jewels. . . . And much that is no more.

We descended at the *popote* as the hand of the church clock pointed to 12.15. Blue-clad officers were standing by the windows reading the Belfort morning paper just arrived, and the Paris newspapers of the day before, as I went in.

The enemy is beating his retreat through the Argonne

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Forest, to the sound of the hour of destiny, and there are armistice and abdication rumors, and indications that they want to *sauver les meubles*, or, as they would say, seeing they've got into a bad business, *retten was zu retten ist*—i.e., German unity, which, saved, means all is saved. But there are strange dissolvents infiltrating everywhere, scarcely any substance can resist, and the blood of peoples boiling over, and much good broth spilling, and too many cooks everywhere. For what man but wants to try his 'prentice hand at seasoning of the mess? And it was all talked about to the consuming of Mère Labonne's especially excellent Sunday dinner, an example of *la vraie, la délicieuse cuisine française bourgeoise*. There were *pieds de veau* that melted in the mouth, and creamed potatoes, after which a very delicious *hachis*, with some sort of horseradish sauce, and when I remark that it has also a touch of garlic, Serin cries out, "But not at all—it's only horseradish." On my being supported by everybody at the table, he finally says, with an innocent but somewhat discomfited smile, "It's true that there must be a lot for *me* to notice it." Then he tells with gusto of a repast in his dear Toulouse where there was a whole cold pheasant for each guest, and each pheasant was blanketed with such a thick cream of garlic that the bird itself could scarcely be seen. "It was exquisite," he added. "I dare say; one can even smell it here," some one cruelly finished.

Then they spoke of how the French had supported captivity better than the English, and why.

"We always talk while eating," said Bernard, "no matter how scanty or ignoble the repast. It's our hour for relaxation." (Any one lunching or dining at French officers' messes will have noticed this.) "But with the English it is different. They eat silently, and in captivity they easily get the spleen and fall into melancholy,



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because the food isn't served as they would like, or because they can't wash or shave or exercise."

And I told the story of the brother of a French friend whom I had recently seen, just back from nearly four years' captivity, who returned in such a stout, rosy condition that his sister was ashamed to show him, and when asked about her *pauvre frère* would blush.

We sat long, talking now of books, now of personages, now of local happenings, Serin telling of passing that morning through one of the smaller villages where even the young girls had saluted him with a military salute as he rode by—and one of the officers said, with a flash, "*Très délivrées celles-là!*" ("Very delivered, those!") Then some one told the story of the man who came down to Masevaux to make a book on Alsace and, seeing the line of the trenches marked that day in blue on the commandant's map, remarked, in a *dégagé* way, "*Le Rhin, n'est-ce pas?*" ("The Rhine, I suppose?")

"Not yet," was the quiet answer.

He then rushed them all off their feet for ten hours, after which, having got what *he* wanted, he went back to Paris and wrote his book. And from what I hear it wasn't a bad book, either. Though one of the officers said he knew he could do the same about Prague or Peking, that he'd never seen, with some books, a good pair of scissors and as much paste as he wanted.

All is handled lightly, as only a group of Frenchmen could handle it, *glissant, n'appuyant jamais*, each bringing his little gift of wit and culture, enjoying the impersonal with the same pleasure as the personal, in the French way. Of course, the *communiqués* are as honey after four years of bitter herbs, very bitter, even though distilled in extinguishable hope.

And I must say that to me lively and untrammelled conversation is the salt of daily life; and if, as it sometimes happens, one's own thoughts are expanded,

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brightened, and returned to one, it is indeed delectable above all things, the true salt to be used in quantities (if you can get it). For, alas! the majority of people have no ideas, when you come down to it, or, having a few, they are pig-headed and look but into the converging point of the angle, knowing nothing of the splendor of diverging lines where self is swallowed up in unself. And there are the close-headed, whose minds work slowly in a cramped way, or not at all, and they are forever complaining that they only think of things to say when they get home and the lights are out. They might just as well not think of them (one sometimes doubts if they really do) for all the good they are to their neighbors. And there are those very thin-skinned ones who immediately get contentious, and think the arrow is meant for them instead of the universe at large, and one could go on indefinitely through the list of impenetrable heads, to whom the blow of an ax is as the brush of a feather, or cushiony heads that once dented, however, never regain their contours, and many, many others. These all need material sauces, good, rich sauces to their food, or they would find it tasteless, not having even a pinch of this other salt to season it with. And they are mostly those who do not work, but whose fathers worked—sometimes even their mothers—and *oh, là là*, the subject is endless, for everybody talks—even those who have nothing to say.

## V

### THE BALLON D'ALSACE

**SUNDAY AFTERNOON.**—At two o'clock I started out with Captain Bernard and Captain Antoni for the great mountain known as the Ballon<sup>1</sup> d'Alsace, sometimes called, too, "the knot of Europe," in an especially high-powered motor (I never know the mark of any of them, distinguishing a Ford from a Rolls-Royce only by the generally pampered feeling pervading me when in the latter).

The Ballon rises like a wall at the very end of the valley of the Doller, and we passed through many villages, shining pinkly in the prismatic November afternoon, where there was much going into church for vespers, of blue- or black-clad figures. The thirteenth century-towered church of Sewen is on a slight eminence in the heart of the village, and the cemetery around it was crowded with the faithful, regretting their dead, or some, perhaps, for one reason or another (What know I?), feeling, "'Tis better they lie there." "Live long, but not too long for others," is an excellent device.

The charming lake of Sewen, though far from the village, seen from a certain angle, reflects the tower of the church and is, they told me, of Moorish origin. These valleys and hills seem everywhere like open books concerning the dim, dim youth of the earth; I had a sense

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<sup>1</sup> The word "ballon" comes from the patois, *bolong*, *bois long*, which took its name from the great forest, "La Selva Vosagus," once covering the Alsatian plain and its mountains.

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of my transitories, with those lessons written everywhere. And it is autumn, too.

We got out at the immense reservoir of Alfelt which dams up dangerous springtime floods with its giant wall of masonry, for from the "knot of Europe" loosened waters flow to the North Sea and to the Mediterranean. Climbing to the top of the rocky elevation, we read on the monument the date of the inauguration of the reservoir, 1884, and the name, Prince Hohenlohe Schillingfurst, Statthalter.

And, looking down, the shining villages through which we had just passed, Sewen, Oberbruck, Niederbruck, Masevaux, are like beads on the thread of the lovely valley, lying between the breasts of the hills.

The mountain-ringed lake of the reservoir reflects the rich coloring of the hills in which it is set; white-stemmed, yellow-leaved birches, blood-red cherry trees; rust-colored beeches, larch trees shining like torches borne by wanderers, on black pine slopes; all is seen twice—once on the hills and once in the mirror of the lake.

Then we mount up, up, up, twisting and turning over the magnificent military road, made like so many others since the war, to become some day the joy of tourists, when, thousands upon ten thousands, nay, millions upon millions, they shall come from over ocean and mountain to see what it all looks like and get the belated thrill.

Violet hills become black, outlined against a copper-colored band of western horizon. Captain Bernard points out some English airplanes just over our heads, tiny, tiny specks hanging in a high waste of heaven, and I wonder if in one of them sits my friend, the chartered accountant of the Belfort train, fulfilling his destiny in the air.

We leave the motor at the highest point of the road, where trees no longer grow, and start to climb the grassy crest, patterned with great brown patches of

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barbed-wire defenses. Captain Bernard's sharp eyes soon discerned the *chicanes*, intricate, almost indistinguishable pathways through the wire, and if one knew them one could get through without leaving one's clothes. Breathless, we arrived at the *table d'orientation* and find ourselves looking out over what seemed the edge of the universe. In front of us lay the gorgeous panorama of the Alps and behind it the wide band of copper-colored sky, with here and there a burnishing of glaciers by the dipping sun. To our left stretched the immense and splendid valley of the Rhine, behind it the Black Forest, clearly yet softly outlined against a paler horizon. One could have rolled the whole earth like a ball from the feet. I felt as if suddenly freed from any heaviness of the flesh, and Goethe's soaring words brushed against my mind, and beckoned me on—those words he cried after he had reached the Brocken and was looking down on a cloud-covered Germany.

*Dem Geier gleich  
Der auf schweren Morgenwolken  
Mit sanftem Fittig ruhend,  
Nach Beute schaut,  
Schwebe mein Lied.<sup>1</sup>*

I knew those vast expanses for material out of which a new earth, if not a new heaven, must be formed, on some eighth day of creation. And the new earth was to be made out of old and conflicting desires, worn, yet persistent passions, small, yet greedy thoughts, the whole about as facile as the weighing of the winds, making one almost feel that He who worked with new materials those first seven days had the easier part.

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<sup>1</sup> Like to the hawk  
That on auroral clouds  
Doth rest his velvet wings,  
Looking for prey,  
So hovers my song.

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I was filled, too, with a great longing for an improbable wisdom and strength to be breathed into the men who are to reharness the plunging, escaping destinies of the nations. Each man that has his hands on the reins seems like some one clinging to a runaway horse, trying to dominate a relentless, unreasoning, reckless course.

Reverberating through the eternal hills was the sound of heavy cannon; and before my mind came a vision of the great forges wherein they were formed, men working day and night in hot, dim, noisy spaces—Creusot and Krupp and Skoda, and all the rest. . . .

Some near summit hid the dread Hartmannswillerkopf, the "Verdun" of Alsace, and one of the officers spoke of that winter of 1916, when its snow was always pink with blood and black with death—"tens of thousands sleep there." I thought of the souls breathed out into that pure, high ether, like to this, but cold, cold, almost as tenuous as the immortal stuff commingling with it.

Then we started to the other edge of the summit, whence we might look into *l'élégante et douloureuse Lorraine*, for one side of the Ballon slopes toward Alsace and the other toward Lorraine.

As we threaded our way carefully through more *chicanes* of barbed-wire defenses "that you had to have your nose in before they could be distinguished," I discerned on the crag three familiar silhouettes, outlined against the heavens toward the Lorraine slope. And as things are rarely in their proper setting nowadays, there on the Ballon d'Alsace were three dusty Y. M. C. A. men who had come from their *cantine* at Belfort. We spoke to them and gave our names, and the brightest one, Tallant was his name, asked if I were the wife of my husband—and said he'd been on the Mexican border.

Then we told them where the *table d'orientation* was,

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but forgot to point out the *chicanes*, and we saw them from a distance entangled in barbed wire. Their souls were safe, I hope, but heaven help those khaki clothes!

And looking down into Lorraine from my splendid height was as if looking into another world, for its distances were bronze and silver and pale green.

Great black spots of shadow cast by wasteful masses of white clouds were lying heavily over those new and ancient battle-fields. Forever obliged to protect themselves from some invader, the villages hide rather than display themselves, and are barely detached from the silvery brown of the plain, crossed here and there by the bosky lines of the Meuse, or those of the great canal joining the French river to the Rhine. And each tiny hill has been an altar or a fortress, often both at once. Over the majestic, melancholy stretch Romans have passed, the hosts of Attila, Normans, Germans, Burgundians, Swedes, English, and many others. Now its white roads sound to the tramp of American armies, are encumbered by giant quantities of war material brought from over the seas. And of all who have passed over it, of the most ancient even, much remains. Close against one another are Roman encampments, feudal castles, the two-sided, two-faced bastion defenses of Vauban, the great, mined earthworks of modern times, and now in leafy darkneses are the cement emplacements of the big guns of the twentieth century.

But alas! as I turned to go, pulling my gaze from the wide horizon (a pale, pale pink where it covered the western way to the city that is the heart of France), I saw on that slope, directly under me, a cruel statue of Jeanne d'Arc. A stiff yet boneless Pucelle sat astride an equally stiff yet boneless steed; both seemed about to drop into space, the mountain falling away from them, and both were of a dreadful superfluity! However, one isn't so plagued with horrid modern statues in

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Alsace as in other places I have been, for they run rather to fountains and living waters. At St.-Amarin, for instance, I don't remember anything later or more personal than the fiery Gallic cock, "*der spuckende Welschhahn*," surmounting a sphere, borne in turn by the column of the 1830 fountain; and the fountain in the Place du Chapitre at Masevaux, bearing the date 1768, has a single, lovely column, too, on whose top burns a stone flame in an urn. And the shaft of the fountain of the wine-growers at Thann is a mass of rich yet noble carving, surmounted by a helmeted figure bearing a shield on his back. Furthermore, crystal water flows into its six-sided emblazoned basin.

I think of the statue of Thiers, *Libérateur du Territoire*, in that dusty, begonia-planted, iron-railed plot in front of the station at Nancy, and I could weep.

But hereabout I haven't found a single nineteenth-century statesman in frock-coat and top-hat, done in granite, nor any bronze female pointing him the way to a dubious heaven, with a long finger and a heavy palm-branch—and so may it remain.

Certainly the *très chic chef* of the Military Mission will be well punished for *his* good works in Alsace if they ever raise a statue to him. For they will make him, too, out of either bronze or marble with a *plaque de commissaire* on his frock-coated breast, and heaven knows what kind of a hat they'll put on him, or how the fancy will seize them to do his hair! And the statue won't be of lapis lazuli, as it should be, nor of pale sapphire, nor of dull turquoise, nor of any of the lovely blue stones of the earth, alone fit to perpetuate the beauty of the blue-clad men who have written France's greatest epic. Blue-clad men splashed about fountains at twilight, blue-clad men taking form and substance as they emerge out of gray mountain mists, blue-clad men weaving their cerulean patterns through the woof of long-



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trunked pine forests, blue-clad men like bits of turquoise embedded in the matrix of white roads, and what know I besides?

As I gave a sigh for Art and a prayer for the serried ranks of her erring devotees, I found myself looking into another splendid valley, toward Giromagny, near where is a height known as La Planche des Belles Filles, after a story of the Thirty Years' War, when men with blue eyes and very light hair and skin were for a while masters of the domains of Belfort and Ferrette. After the best manner of invading armies, 'tis recorded that these Swedes committed many excesses, and dark-eyed girls lay concealed in the forest, and when they feared their hiding-place had been discovered they fled to the mountains, but even there they were pursued by the hosts of fair-haired, fair-skinned, blue-eyed men, bent on the most elemental of errands. And again they fled precipitately, scarcely knowing their direction. When they got to the top they found themselves on a great ledge of rock and in their distress they tumbled from the height onto other rocks below, and the blue-eyed, fair-skinned, fair-haired men from the North knew them not. Hence the "Ledge of the Beautiful Girls."

And then we took a last look at the vast heaping of the Alps; to the left, the Jungfrau and the Mönch, to the right, Mont Blanc, the whole great mass outlined against that persistent dark-red band. The glacier of the Jungfrau was as if in conflagration; Mont Blanc was soft and roseate, yet its beauty left me cold.

Captain Bernard said he had climbed the Ballon many times and only twice before had he seen the great panorama; but as, alack! to him who does not want shall be given, except for their gorgeousness, I would have turned from them indifferently, had not my beloved mother been dwelling almost in the shadow of Mont Blanc.

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But one<sup>1</sup> has written, as men of genius write of things in times of peace, of this Ballon d'Alsace. He who brought out from his Gallo-British mind new things and old has said in one of the most charming of books: "Then on the left you have all the Germanies, a great sea of confused and dreaming people, lost in philosophies and creating music, frozen for the moment under a foreign rigidity, but some day to thaw again and to give a word to us others. They cannot remain long apart from visions." I thought they have, indeed, given a "word." But when again the "visions"?

I turned and followed my two blue-clad officers down the Alsatian slope, over the gray grass, threading neatly through the *chicanes* of the brown, barbed-wire defenses, and got into the motor waiting on the roadway once known as that of the Dukes of Lorraine.

We were silent as we started down the great mountain. I was again wrapped in thoughts of the New Day to be created out of old and rotting stuffs, and of the death of heroes. The hills were velvet-palled against the deepening crimson band of light.

Later, a *panne*, and we waited in a violet-valleyed world, illumined only by white candelabraed torches of strangely luminous larch and birch, while the prudent yet daring chauffeur changed the tire.

A great khaki-colored motor passed us, marked with two stars, filled with khaki-clad men of my race, going up, up, whence we had come.

Then we stopped at the little restaurant of Alfeld. The lake of many colors was dark and mysterious. Its high tints had been dipped in something deep in the hours since last I saw it, though strange blues and purples and rust colors were still reflected in it, and the light of a single, very yellow birch had not yet been snuffed. At the restaurant four glasses of white

<sup>1</sup> Hilaire Belloc, *The Road to Rome*.

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liqueur were poured for us (one, of course, for the chauffeur), distilled from raspberries, the odor of the berry very strong, and long afterward the taste, the *arrière-goût*, remains in the mouth, as if one had just eaten the fruit. But one of the officers said, "All the same, it doesn't equal a good *quetsch* or *kirsch* or, above all, a good *mirabelle*."

And then we dipped into the darkening valley of the Doller and through dim villages found the way to Masevaux and the house on the Place du Chapitre, where the Demoiselles Braun had tea awaiting us, and there were stories told that made us laugh. And one was of the renowned 15th Dragoons, so long quartered there, which, briefly—and humanly—is this:

At intervals after their departure little dragoons saw the light of a war-world, and, to be exact, fifty in all saw it. The curé was broken-hearted at the ravages among his sheep, but he was also a practical, long-sighted curé, so he wrote, presenting his idea of the matter before the colonel of the regiment, with the result that from the savings-box of that same regiment a sum was subtracted to provide ten years later for the first communion and confirmation clothes of the fifty! (Would you have thought of it?) Then, casting about in his mind how he could further improve the general situation, this time not so much from the temporal point of view as from that of eternity, he decided upon a pilgrimage—a pilgrimage of reparation to Huppach, where is the shrine known as that of the Virgin of Klein Einsiedeln, near Sewen, through which we had just passed. He announced the pilgrimage from the pulpit, then took the further precaution of rounding up his strayed sheep in person, and in person conducting them to Huppach to offer up prayers and tears to the Virgin of Klein Einsiedeln. There were so many of them, however, and they were mostly so young, that history does not record the

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pilgrimage as being entirely without smiles—and God have mercy on us all!

But the curé was not yet (so to speak) out of the woods, for fate replaced the Dragoons by another regiment, having, as it happened, a colonel possessed of a boundless love for his men and who couldn't do enough for them (or rather have the inhabitants of Masevaux do enough for them).

"The inhabitants of Masevaux are very nice, very nice indeed," quoth he, "but the happiness of my men above everything. We left three thousand on the battlefield last week, and the others need distraction—of a pleasant sort. My men above everything."

So the colonel who loved his men with a boundless love and, furthermore, was not one to waste time in vain endeavors to portray the eternal feminine as undesirable, nor to render the chase unpopular, caused dances to be organized on this very Place du Chapitre, under these very linden trees, then heavy-scented, and every evening. The curé, foreseeing trouble, with the aid of Heaven and his own undiscourageable will, had them suppressed after eight days (eight days is a long time) of wrestling with leagued powers both civil and military. And again God have mercy on us all!

Now the virtuous, I mean the truly virtuous (that is, the untried, untempted virtuous), mustn't throw stones at Masevaux nor at this book, but rather remember that anything could have happened to anybody had everything been different. And even so, hasn't a lot happened to many of you? You know a good deal better than I do just how much.

To the *popote* at seven-thirty, and before I'm an hour older I'm going to tell you about the *popote*. And you'll wish you had been there instead of hearing about it—as runs the classic expression, "*Regarder manger des glaces*," and I give the translation, "Watch others eat

## THE BALLON D'ALSACE

ice-cream," partly because I want you all to know just what I mean, and partly because some one in the United States wrote to my publishers that *My Lorraine Journal* was a nice book, but couldn't they suggest to me that I write my books either in French or English.

MRS. O'S.: "But, my dear Mr. Graham" (his name is Graham, and this may be his chance of immortality), "I couldn't write one entirely in French to save my soul, and to save my soul I'd find it impossible when everything I'm writing about takes place in France not to slip into *la belle langue* occasionally."

MR. GRAHAM (from a distance): "Occasionally! There you're at it again. Occasionally!" (It does get on his nerves.)

MRS. O'S.: "And there is another saying to the effect that '*On ne peut pas contenter tout le monde et son père.*' That is to say, dear Mr. Graham, that you can't please everybody and your father as well, and this, of course, mostly applies to young men (are you a son or are you a father?) trying to win smiles outside family circles—and father ultimately paying the bills. But as it occurs to me here, there must be some connection."

MR. GRAHAM: "I don't see it. And while I'm about it, I'd like to tell you a thing or two concerning those Mexican books of yours. The Spanish was awful—even *The Yale Review* and *The Nation* noticed it."

MRS. O'S. (getting a bit nasty): "It's about all either of them did notice, especially *The Yale Review*; and nobody loves me on *The Nation*, but it was entirely the printer's fault. He received them immaculate. I turned my face to the wall for three days after a glance at *A Diplomat's Wife*. But then you probably don't remember how perfectly sweet about these very books *The North American Review* was (a man with the most perceptive of souls and a neat flair for the imponderabilities, named Lawrence Gilman, does *their* book reviews),

## ALSACE IN RUST AND GOLD

also *The New Republic*, which possesses a man named Alvin Johnson, inexorably sure about the humanities, separating with a single, infallible gesture the goats of letters from the sheep (but he still thinks, alas! that all men are born free and equal). And *The New York Sun* was kind, kind, and *The New York Evening Post*, too, and they do say this latter rarely says anything nice about people till they're dead and can't enjoy it, and *The New York Tribune*, which has the reputation of being very particular about itself, and *The New York Times*, which never jokes and is known as a searcher after truth."

Mr. Graham, dreadfully bored with me, mumbles something like "this is what you get when you try to do somebody a good turn." I couldn't catch it all, as he'd doubtless continued farther on his journey through the great Northwest. He wrote from one of a chain of "Grand Trunk Pacific Hotels," and all I can think of to call after him is *Bon voyage*, though he won't like it.

And now back to Masevaux in the valley of the Doller—Masevaux smelling a bit like nice leather things in expensive shops, with a hint of falling leaves.

## VI

### LA POPOTE

AND how shall he who has not dined be strong? And how shall he who is not girded fight? And how shall he who has not wept laugh? And how shall he who hath not made a free offering of his life find it? And many other things occur to me, but enough for the wise of heart.

And now for *la popote*, which is in what was once the house of the Oberforster, in a street doubtless always muddy, looking out on the church, and it is square, of gray stucco, and red brick with a hall running through the center, like many and many a house.

The woodwork is everywhere painted brown and the wall-paper, too, is brown, a lighter, depressing brown. Above the dining-table is a ponderous, imitation-bronze chandelier, but its cruel light now shines on blue-clad men who have fought the good fight, agreeable, cultivated men of the world, and it touches strongly scar and galloon and decoration of these, selected *ex millibus et ex millibus*, by hidden powers, to return from battle-field and trench. . . .

It's the Oberforster's glass that we use; it's his imitation-bronze fruit-dish that is now filled with dark, rich grapes of victory. It's his imitation-tin and real-glass punch-bowl that is on the table by the window. On the porcelain stove that heats well, too well (I sit with my back close to it), is a *dégagé* marble bibelot, the heads of a man and a woman in *basso-rilievo* cut in an

## ALSACE IN RUST AND GOLD

obtrusively chance bit of marble, and it bears the motto, "*Amor condusse noi.*" Perhaps on their honeymoon, the Oberforster and his bride had made the classic *Italienische Reise*, and had pressed closely, so closely against each other in the railway carriage, that the apprehensive fellow-voyagers shut their eyes or sought another compartment. The Teutonic "will to live" is irresistible, and when it's at work there's nothing to be done except get out of the way.

Theirs were the lithographs representing beings of the Biedermayer epoch, theirs the many-tiered machine-turned, walnut sideboard. Theirs was (I know not how it got into that company of *ersatz* and imitation) a beautiful old glass carafe, a shepherd and a sacrificial lamb engraved upon it (perhaps once a church vessel), but in it was a stopper, half cork and half tin, with an imitation turquoise in the middle.

Theirs was a smoking-set of imitation tin whose massive ash-receiver in the most horrid *art nouveau* continually mocked the delicate spirals of smoke. Said the commandant one evening, flicking his cigar-ash into the dreadful thing:

"That invasion was almost as bad as this. You could have bought an ash-receiver like it in every big shop in Paris."

"And in every little one," finished Laferrière. "Thank God the frontier *is* closed, even at the price."

In the corner between the windows was an upright piano piled with the best of music, and there was a large and completely uninteresting turned-wood clock, stopped at 12.25 on August 7th, four years ago.

And the man that earned and owned it all is dead in a soldier's grave, and the woman, Anna by name, weeps somewhere her lost love and the equally lost gods of her household. *Et c'est la guerre.*

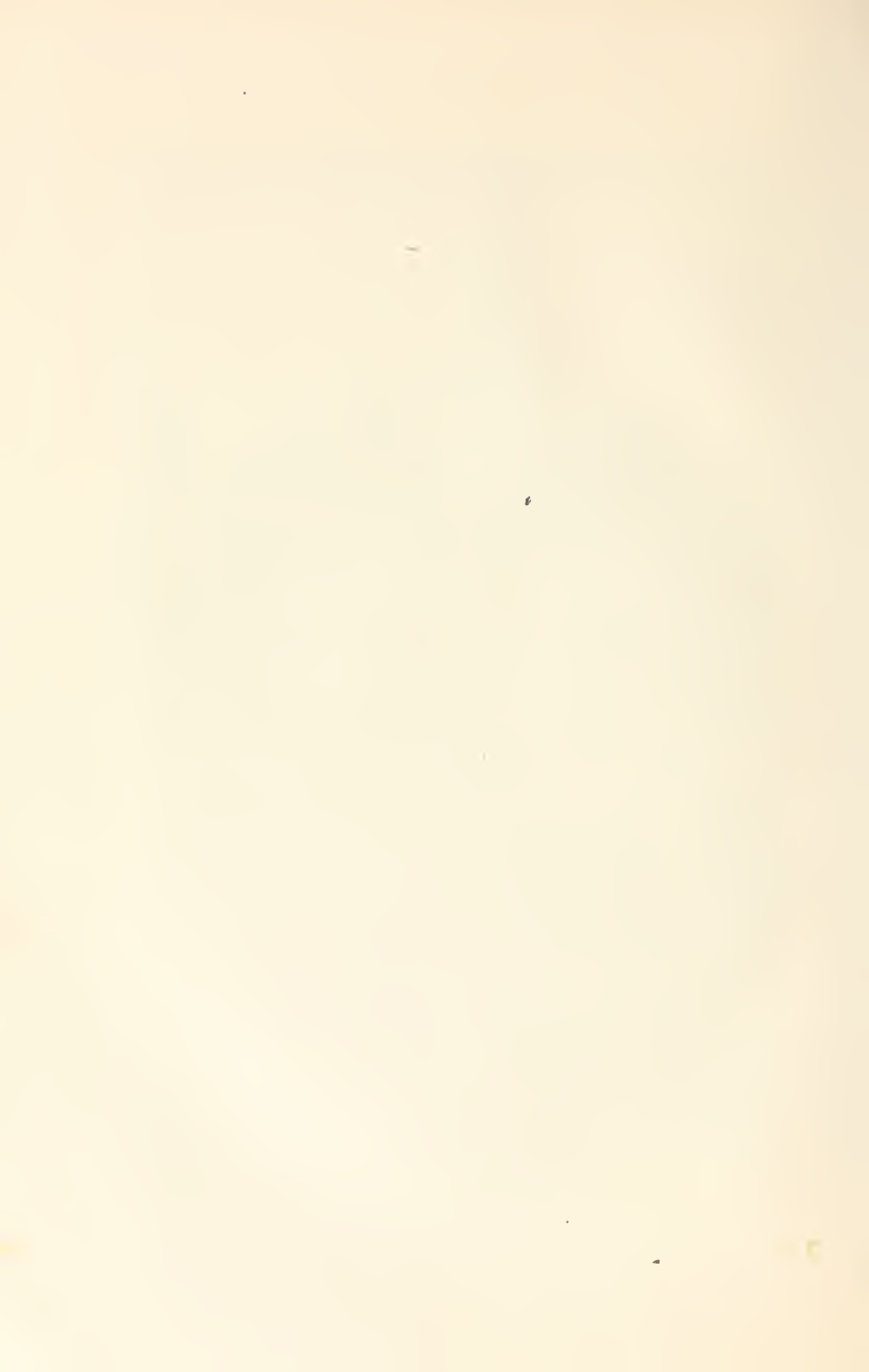
As for Madame Labonne's cooking, she knows her





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COMMANDANT POULET



## LA POPOTE

business, and if it weren't the obvious duty of those sitting about the table to take the gifts the gods and Madame Labonne provide, I should feel I were living much too well.

She gives us a *gâteau à la crème* that disappears smoothly, leaving but an exquisite memory. She has another *gâteau à l'oignon* (don't turn away; it's perfectly delicious and takes a day to make the onion part), her *filets* melt in the mouth, and her *purées* are the insubstantial fabric of a dream. When she serves the classic Alsatian dish of sauerkraut decorated with boiled potatoes and shining pieces of melting pork, you don't really need to eat for twenty-four hours, and wouldn't go to the *popote* except for the conversation and the company. Sometimes the officers, the unwedded ones, think of marrying Madame Labonne—she's fat and about sixty and doesn't try to look young (by her works alone they shall know her), and the married ones think of trying to introduce her into their happy homes in some rôle or other.

And when they move into the rich, shining Alsatian plain, that they have looked down upon these four long years, she is to take part in the triumphal procession.

And this is how we generally find ourselves placed at table. I sit on the right of Commandant Poulet, who, somewhat as a prince of story, for these four years has administered with much calm, with great good sense, with wide understanding, and, above all, with immense tact and kindness, the not always simple affairs of the delivered ones of the reconquered triangle.

Only he can know the difficulties of the French Military Mission, though all may see the results. It is a land flowing with honey if not with milk (the busy bee in and out of war-time doth its work, though, it would seem, not so the cow).

In full maturity it has been given to Commandant

## ALSACE IN RUST AND GOLD

Poulet to see results, and sometimes I have looked almost in and at a man whose strange lot during the war years has been constructive work. His first public appearance was when, as *tout jeune lieutenant remplissant des bouts de table*, he accompanied President Loubet to St. Petersburg on his 1902 visit. Since then many honors have been his, and here in Alsace he has been both Paul and Apollo, for he has reaped where he has planted and God *has* given the increase. *Très chic*, in his horizon-blue, with his high decorations on his breast, *et très homme du monde*. This is what I see and it seems very fair. Of his personal life what can I know?—except that it must be as the life of all that walk the earth, disillusion succeeding illusion, grief tripping up joy; for there is no getting away from the old verses:

*Ainsi du mal au bien,  
De la joie à la peine  
Passe la vie humaine.*

Somewhere in Lorraine the commandant has a destroyed château. But he can always dwell in the dwelling of his labors in Alsace.

Vis-à-vis is his first aide, Captain Tirman, whom I saw on my arrival, always with deep rings under his eyes, too much in rooms and bending over desks—*il boit le travail*. Entirely devoted to his chief. He is musical, too, and sometimes while waiting in the dining-room for the mess to assemble we find him playing Beethoven or Bach, or more recent and more compromising Germans, from the piles of the Oberforster's music on the Oberforster's piano. *La musique n'a pas de patrie*—for musical men who have fought. (But let a zealous *civi'* far from the front hear a strain of Schumann or Brahms issuing from some window and he runs straightway to the police.) Captain Tirman wears the Legion of Honor and the *Croix de Guerre*, and is so pale,

## LA POPOTE

I am told, because of the hard campaigns he has passed through, and wounds and illness. He is always in charge in the absence of the commandant, but though *être Tirmannisé* is one of the gentle jokes of the *popote*, no signs of tyranny were apparent to me.

Captain Bernard, second aide, is, like the commandant, from Lorraine, and had prepared himself for the Paris bar. He conducted himself admirably during the war, Laferrière tells me. Wounded three times, he bears a great scar—*sa belle cicatrice*, as his comrades proudly call it—on his forehead (Verdun, August, 1916) and over his heart *la Légion d'Honneur* and the *Croix de Guerre*. Always very carefully dressed—*tiré à quatre épingles* (pulled out by four pins), as they nearly all are.

At his right sits Captain Sérin from Toulouse, the only Meridional at the table. He is very straightforward and uncomplicated, I should judge, as regards his psychology, with the rather objective eye of the man from the south. (They don't dream the way we farther north do.) He sees a joke at any distance and is the sort, they tell me, who would obey as simply as he would breathe, without a thought of hesitation, an order unto death. The sort that when told to bring up reinforcements at a moment when it seems impossible, quite simply does it, and it only *happens* to happen that he is living. He is not tall, but wide of shoulder, holding himself very straight, and on his breast there are ribbons, too. He is chief of the Gendarme Service, the first and last provost of Alsace reconquered.

On the other side of Captain Bernard sits Captain Toussaint, chief of the Forestry Service of the Masevaux district, clad in bottle-green, with silver bugles on his collar and the Legion of Honor and other decorations on his breast, *d'une grande bonté*, his comrades tell me. He is from the north, from Douai (his brother was killed at the front), tall, slim, pale-faced, lantern-jawed,

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everything is in his eyes—in the *regard*, as some one said of him—and much of his life is passed alone in forests. So different from Captains Bernard and Lavallée, living in Paris, between whom he generally sits; and he nearly always comes in late from his forests for luncheon and dinner.

“For Toussaint, Creation is represented by the first day when the heavens were formed, and everything that came afterward had something to do with forests,” some one said last night, as he was talking rather hotly about the war-time cutting down of the trees of France, and the influence the loss of forests had on the life of nations. *Très catholique*, also; but then these men of the Mission, with all of whom I have entered tabernacles, are of an extreme reverence. What they “believe” I know not.

Lieutenant Laferrière sits sometimes by me, sometimes at the end of the table. He has early gray hair, a fresh complexion, gray-blue eyes with a certain inwardness of expression, a smiling movement of the lips when speaking, and, with all his wit, an extreme kindness in human judgments. Indeed, I am struck by something of softness and patience in the eyes of each one of these men to whom nothing of war is foreign, who have looked on all combinations of mortal anguish, and whose eyes at times, too, have had the red look, the hard, bright look of men who have just killed.

Laferrière is very cultivated after the way of us dwellers in cities. He was Doctor of Law at the University of Lille. On the 2d of August, 1914, he closed his books, after which, as under-officer, he had lived for months that closely packed life of the trenches, “where one was never physically a moment alone” (hardest of all hardships, I have heard fastidious men say), then he had been called as jurist to the Mission. Emotional, but through circumstances or will, how can I know?

## LA POPOTE

giving the effect of having dominated the personal—to what point also I know not.

Lieutenant Lavallée, but recently come from Paris, sits at another end. His personality is less striking than some of the others at the table, though he has *une tête un peu mauresque*, like pictures of the *Conquistadores*, and is inclined to solemnity of mien. He has a charming voice, fresh, with warm notes in it, and sometimes of an evening sings Breton *chansons populaires*. We especially like the one concerning *la douce Annette*, who spun a fatal love-story with a certain Pierre who wouldn't let go her hand.

There is one, Stroll by name, now absent, but his comrades evidently love him, for I often hear, "What a pity Stroll isn't here"; or, "That is Stroll's story."

Also for a few days *en visite* like myself is Captain Antoni, born at Strasbourg, but very French in appearance, a tall, *svelte*, thin-faced man with a rising and falling inflexion in his voice, who has been through the whole campaign and wears many decorations. He said last night that the fighting at Verdun, especially that at Hill 304, was the worst he had seen.

At this moment the Verdun sector, which knows the blood of men of many climes, is moist with that of *my* countrymen.

Now this is part of what I see as I sit at table with these men. The common patriotic effort tends to screen the personal life of each, of which I know nothing. But I do know that destiny is largely formed by character and endowments, and, barring the fact that time and chance happeneth to all, I would be tempted to wager that when such or such a thing came to such or such a one, *thus* he received it—gift or blow—thus he used it, once his own. So unescapable and visible are the sequences of character.

Sometimes we play bridge in the evening, pleasant,

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easy bridge, anybody taking a card back when once played, and changing his mind about declarations. As they so truly say, "*Nous jouons pour nous amuser.*"

And yesterday there appeared on the table the famous *cafetière* and Sérin, his face shining with a great light, performed the rites. It was one of those large, high glass bulbs with a nickel coffee-pot below. Dry coffee is put into the glass bulb, water into the pot, an alcohol-lamp beneath, and the whole is hermetically sealed. After which, according to the mysterious and wonderful laws of nature, the water rises and wets the coffee; it must rise thrice, giving forth at the same time volcanic sounds. During the ceremony nothing else is thought of. The officiating high priest is harried with liturgical suggestions, or unkind remarks are made about his natural endowments. As that corked spout of the pot, horrid with potentialities, is turned now toward one, now toward the other, men who would have given their lives without a thought in the trenches, get nervous and call to Sérin, "*Dis-donc, tu vas me crever un œil!*" "Not toward Madame. It would be too terrible," etc., etc., and in the end the spout, with all its possibilities, is turned toward the Oberforster's made-in-Germany clock. After which one has a delicious cup of coffee and conversation becomes normal.<sup>1</sup>

Last night I found they were talking about giving a certificate of good conduct to one of them who is married, to take home with him to reassure his wife. A comrade, after a little badinage in the Latin manner, but very discreet I must say, objects: "But now there won't be any *permissions*," and, doubtfully, "We would have to give him the certificate for three whole months."

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<sup>1</sup> A letter from Laferriere of November 20th, recounting national events, and the breaking up of the little group, says also: "*La cafetière, la fameuse cafetière a une large fêlure qui fait craindre sa fin prochaine. Ce serait un symbole?*"



## LA POPOTE

Then, like the antiphon of some song, a voice said,  
"Trois mois, c'est long."

Another said, "Trois mois, c'est très long."

Another, with a sigh, "C'est trop long . . ." And I  
to smile—within myself.

Then a stumbling home on an invisible but strong  
horizon-blue arm, through the inky streets, ankle-deep  
in mud. Sometimes I haven't known which one of the  
various kind arms it was, the electric pocket-lamp only  
occasionally making the darkness more manifest. No  
one to bump into, as circulation in the streets is forbidden  
after nine o'clock, on account of possible espionage.

And you will say these are pleasant days!

*Later.*—Hunting in the bookcase, I found a small  
diamond-printed copy of *Hermann und Dorothea*. As,  
to the sound of near night-firing, I turned its smooth  
old pages, I realized it for one of the most completely  
objective works of genius ever born into the world. No  
thread of its maker's identity is woven with it, no color  
of his personal experience. I felt but a sense of his com-  
plete and serene equilibrium, though the stream of  
words, bearing those golden thoughts, was so softly  
flowing, so crystal-clear, that it made me remember a  
line from another of Goethe's poems, as subjective as  
this is objective:

*Der Geist ist Bräutigam.  
Wort sei die Braut.*

In the little preface I found that the poet, in his old  
age, was wont to say of *Hermann und Dorothea* that of  
his long poems it was almost the only one that gave him  
pleasure. I seemed to understand what he meant. By  
reason of its complete objectivity, he could have had  
no consciousness of that inadequacy familiar to mortals  
contemplating anything formed from themselves. No  
suffering had attended its birth; rather it would seem

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to have formed itself spontaneously on the heights out of some plastic stuff, light and bright as summer air, imperishable as granite. It did not recall to Goethe (nor does it to one who reads) that night of personal anguish, that day of emptiness, that hour of longing, nor even some glimpsing, vistaed moment wherein personal fulfilment held out its shining, shadowy hand.

In spite of the sound of cannon and the smarting of my eyes from the strain of the tiny Gothic print, for a moment within myself an almost equal feeling of harmony arose, taking a form of Peace, like an antique statue, free yet restrained, noble yet persuasive; bearing no one's mark, nor any signs of workmanship, except that stamped by its own beauty. Then it vanished, leaving the little book to throb between my hands to the beat of my own times. Though generations had passed on and other wars were being fought, and the word "freedom" was again on every lip, as always, the women, the children, the old, were paying the heaviest tithes of invasion. Had I not seen like streams of fugitive populations flooding into Paris that hideous spring of 1918, heard the cries of anguish from those fleeing before an enemy army? Then also death and birth waited not on circumstance, and love and hate, fear and hope, hurry and exhaustion, were at work in strange commingling. I had seen deeds of succor, too, like unto those of the lovers, proffered in boundless devotion, by nameless, uncounted men and women, coming from the world's ends to minister to its woe.

A vision of *toux ceux qui ont bu à la coupe amère de cette époque* passed before me. Deeply sighing, I at last put out my light, thinking "war is war," needing no adjectives, and of the changelessness of the human heart, however the formulas may be multiplied and renewed; and forever *Væ victis!*

## VII

### THE HOUSES OF THE CHANOINESSES

THE COMMANDANT TRACES THE RECONQUERED TRIANGLE ON MY  
MAP. THE MILITARY MISSION

**M**ONDAY, *November 4th.*—Dreamed of old griefs and awakened with the heavy taste their memory can even now distil. Raining. The yellow-and-brown carpet under the lindens of the Place du Chapitre is wet and dull and the few leaves still on the trees are soft and heavy, the houses damp and shabby. "The old wounds burn," even here, where all is new and bright, and fancy flings itself delicately, amorously, consolingly about the pleasant happenings of each day. . . . Fortunately my breakfast is brought early by a smiling maid, who enters, bringing with her the aroma of fresh tea and the delicately scented, dark-green, liquid honey of these pine forests. There is that blessed volatilization of night-grief, and I arise to another pleasant day, knowing once again, however, that everywhere the old ghosts find one. . . .

The rainy light coming in seems but to darken the oak-paneled room. What there is of wall-paper is a darkish blue with a narrow frieze of red. The curtains are stripes of red-and-blue cloth. Even the daytime cover of the very comfortable eider-downed bed is of the same red-and-blue-striped stuff. It was because they were the colors of the French uniform that the young man once living herein, under German rule, chose them.

But he himself is gone, gone the hope of his house.

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One of his sisters was saying to me last night as I tarried for a few minutes in the little sitting-room, where I had first found them all rehangng the portraits of their ancestors:

“The price for peace is so high and terrifying that one can’t yet rejoice in it. Rather one says to oneself in desolation, ‘and all that was so precious is gone, that in the end one may sit around deserted fireplaces, or try to find shelter under bombarded roofs, and be at grips with the terrible *après-guerre!*’” And of her brother:

“At least he fell for the cause that is so dear to us;” she added after a moment’s silence, “it might so easily have been otherwise.”

I have noticed everywhere a great pride tempering grief over fallen beloved dead. Even in mothers’ hearts this pride is strong enough to console. They know why their sons were born, and to many a death of glory has been as a second birth; he whom they lost is, in some way, laid a second time, bright, beautiful, complete, in their arms, and *safe* from life. And they are blessed who so mourn.

Sometimes there are further griefs. I knew a mother of twin sons; one had fallen far away, a gentle, young, musician son, in a fierce, unequal conflict, whose details she was not spared; the other had been brought back to her on his twenty-first birthday a sightless stump. I cannot forget her as she stood, tall, black-veiled, by a pillared door, like an antique statue of grief, her eyes as dry as marble eyes. And though she, too, said:

“At least I know why I bore them, and it was for something more than myself,” the obsession of a further grief was in her eyes as she added, “*I must not die first—* and he is so young!”

Here on the borderland I find there is often an additional reason for pride, where Fate, which could so easily have willed it otherwise, sometimes has allowed

## HOUSES OF THE CHANOINESSES

the beloved to die for the beloved cause, as did the brother whose room is now mine. And this is his story, or rather the end of it. Those first four days of August, 1914, he had gone about the mountain heights and passes with his field-glass continually at his eyes to see if help were not coming from the hills in the guise of the *pantallons rouges*. But on the fourth day he was obliged to accompany his regiment into Germany, where he stayed three months. On hearing of the battle of the Marne through a French prisoner, he cried, "*Nous avons eu là une belle victoire!*" ("We have had a great victory!") and he was put under arrest. His one idea being to desert, he asked to go into the lines again, knowing there would be no opportunity, if he remained in prison, training recruits. His chance came when he was fighting against the English in the north. His chiefs being killed or wounded, he, as under-officer, found himself in command of a company of a hundred and fifty men. With him deserted ninety-seven others. Later, he fell fighting in the French lines near Tahure. And this (it is perhaps much) is all I know of him or ever shall; if he were beloved of a woman or had loved many, I know not. He, the last of his race, took his name with him to the grave.

All that surrounds me as I write was his. His the full bookshelves, with an elaborate set of a *Geschichte der Literatur*, and a *Welt-Geschichte* in many volumes, his the books of early boyhood, of travel, the many old, little books of prayer in tooled and beveled bindings of a generation or two ago, and the piles of the *Revue des Deux Mondes*. Two eighteenth-century maps hang on the walls, one of "Alsatia," with queer German names for familiar places, and another of "Gallia," and there is an incomparable, white, porcelain stove which heats quickly and gives out its pleasant heat during long hours.

## ALSACE IN RUST AND GOLD

On a little corner shelf is an old engraving of the last *chanoinesse* of the Chapter of Masevaux, Xavière de Ferrette. She is dressed in full canonicals, with a large ruched coif and ermine-trimmed mantle; some high order in a Maltese-cross design is suspended from the broad ribbon worn across her breast, and in her hands is a richly embossed prayer-book.

The long face with its immensely high forehead has a full-lipped, very human mouth, and in the right, upper corner is her sixteen-quartered coat of arms.

The story of the Chapter would make good, though long, reading, for, like many other things in this part of the world, it begins with Charlemagne and ends with the French Revolution. Of both France seems equally proud, and certainly *il y en a pour tous les goûts*.

Women always seem to have had great influence on the life of their times in Alsace. Not even those with the vote and all the rights, together with all the privileges of our times, can pretend to half the influence of certain holy women of the so-called dark ages. They built on hilltops and in valleys those many citadels of peace whose traces still are to be seen, where life was free from violence, and, like sweet odors uncorked, their good deeds have perfumed the ages. Saint-Odile, *Vierge Candide et Forte*, daughter of Duke Atalric, is patroness of Alsace, and in her many have sought the feminine ideal of the Alsatian soul; and there are Saint-Richarde, tried by fire for a guiltless love, wife of Louis the Fat, and Herade, Abbess of Hohenburg, author of the famous *Hortus Deliciarum*, preserved through seven centuries and destroyed in the siege of Strasbourg in 1870. These are but a few, and the histories of the secular dwellers in the Rhine Valley, spectacular though they were, seem often quite colorless contrasted with those of these saints of the Holy Roman Empire.

The first monks and pilgrims to come to Alsace were

## HOUSES OF THE CHANOINESSES

from Ireland (the last of these before the very end of the world will doubtless also come from Erin). It would appear that even in those days it could not be said of the Irish that they were neither hot nor cold, which is probably one of the reasons "why God loves them." In the lovely rivered plains and great forests of the Rhine Valley it was they who built the first chapels and traced the first paths. It was an Irish monk whom Atalric, hoping for a son, consulted before the birth of his daughter; but of Saint-Odile another time.

The house next the one wherein I dwell was that of the abbess, and now belongs to Madame Auguste Lauth.

It, too, has a beautiful stairway, with a time-polished oaken balustrade, and it contains the great room of noble proportions and lovely panelings (still heated by the celebrated porcelain stove, fit only for a museum), where the ladies of the Chapter assembled in their rich toilets and great coifs to go to the church, reached by a two-storied gallery, which old prints show as having a most distinguished air, with its sloping roof pierced with oval windows and its pleasant proportions. But the upper story and the roof were done away with in the nineteenth century, which has demolished so much (not always in heat of battle), and it is now but a long, formless building used for some sort of storehouse connected with the Koechlin manufactories. And the way the six houses came to be constructed was this:

The Abbess Xavière de Ferrette, a woman of resolution and energy, as one can easily see by the high forehead and long jaw, becoming alarmed at the increasing expenses of the Chapter and the equally decreasing revenues, decided on some radical remedies. Through the Middle Ages, down to her time, the *chanoinesses* had lived under one roof, and, according to the holy rule, ate together. But with them fared so many outsiders, their friends and their friends' friends, with their

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domestics, that they found themselves being literally eaten out of house and home. The abbess called a solemn meeting wherein they arranged for the building of separate houses, whose construction was given into the hands of Kléber, then architect and inspector of the royal buildings at Belfort. Pictures of Kléber, known rather impersonally to Americans by the Parisian avenue that bears his name, abound in Alsace, and show a sensitive, artistic face, with a pleasure-loving mouth above a short chin, and a halo of light, curly hair. He met an early death in Napoleon's Egyptian campaign. "*Il avait six pieds en tout,*" his contemporaries were wont admiringly to say of him.

In these separate houses, with garden attached, each *chanoinesse* was to live alone with her *demoiselle*, who at her death would step into her very comfortable shoes, and the abbess only was to receive guests in the name of the Chapter.

The house I lodged in was that of the Chanoinesse von Reutner. These dames had to make their titles very clear to their earthly mansions, each having to possess sixteen quarterings evenly balanced, eight on her father's side and eight on her mother's side. Gentlemen were chosen to give their word on this somewhat elusive subject, and methought 'twas well they didn't have to put their hand in the fire at the same time, for what can be sworn to with certainty of those things which have their origin on the mysterious borderland of the emotions? However . . .

The *chanoinesses* belonged mostly to the great families of Alsace, the Masevaux, the Ferrettes, though the records show many German names like Furstenburg and Seckingen, or French like Beaufrémont and Fontenoy.

Sometimes the Abbey and Chapter were under French domination, sometimes under Austrian, sometimes they would be ceded to noble families like those of the Counts



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of Bollwiller and of Fugger, and in many ways their history had been checkered since their foundation in the eighth century.

And as for the Thirty Years' War, they could have told tales of the Swedish invasion scarcely to be beaten by certain tales of our days. Indeed, so complicated is the history of those times, every shade and branch of combatant having fought against every other shade and branch, in kaleidoscopic changes, that when Turenne, allied with the Spaniards, revolted against the king, Louis XIV, it was a Swede, Rosen by name, who helped the Maréchal du Plessis Praslin to conquer him at Réthel. Rosen, who with his brothers had come originally from Livonia with the armies of Gustavus Adolphus, then promptly put on his standard a tower falling on a rose-bush in full bloom, with the device, *Malgré la Tour les Roses fleuriront*.<sup>1</sup>

In turning over pages concerning the involved chronicles of this borderland, I feel once again that history is, of all things, the most difficult to write, because of having to do with facts, and what more elusive than facts, eternally subjective? Even this simplest record of historic days is as different from one that another might have written about the same things as if it dealt, instead, let us say, with the genial suggestion of letting the Hottentots and the Zulus have their own government. It is that fantasy-awakening thing called temperament that is forever at work with facts, one thing always suggestive of another, rather than explanatory of itself, and I frankly rejoice that the "primrose by the river's brim" is to me something more than a primrose.

I am now such a long way from the history of the Chapter that there is scarcely time to get back, and so I will finish quickly by saying that in the epoch pre-

<sup>1</sup> In spite of the Tower (Turenne was a La Tour d'Auvergne) the Roses will bloom.

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ceding the Revolution it found itself entangled in various temporal affairs, especially lawsuits with the inhabitants concerning their convenient but disappearing feudal rights. Otherwise life was probably not too strenuous for the *chanoinesses*. As nothing escapes the influence of its hour and age, why should one think the Chapter entirely escaped those of that light, pervading, charming, inconsequent, rich thing known as the eighteenth century, where everything seems to have finished by a song, or a witty quatrain, or by delicious angels holding up holy-water founts in the shape of lovely shells.

*To the popote at 12.15.*—Its windows look out on the unmistakably plain timepiece in the church tower, and everybody knows when anybody is late, and just how late, and there's a nice little green box on the table designed for fines, but only intermittently insisted on.

Commandant Poulet greets me with the words, "At three o'clock to-day Austria ceases hostilities." Something cruel and red seemed suddenly rolled away.

In a flash I saw that Viennese pre-war world I had known so well, partaking tranquilly of the pleasant things of life, public events making little noise, intellectual passion absent—or discouraged, and things easy, easy—except for those dying of hunger. But that world has been burned to ashes, and the winds of destiny are about to scatter even them.

Then, as usual, some one read the American *communiqué*.

And to the deeds of the First Army must be added those of the National Guard, for the words Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, Missouri, Colorado, New Mexico, New York, New Jersey, are stamped in fadeless red upon the villages and banks of the Meuse.

We talked long, and at two o'clock, as we arose from table, I knew that those others to the east had already arisen from the bitter meal of defeat, and after the

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manner of human hearts were adjusting themselves to the things that *are*. And perhaps there in Vienna they may not find it so difficult. They've been defeated before and they're far enough east to have a touch of fatalism.

*Later.*—Through mist and low-hanging clouds and rain with Captain Bernard to Sewen, where we visited first the school. Neat rows of sabots were in the hallway, all alike to *me*, but it appears some spirit in the feet leads each unmistakably to his or her own pair. A dozen children only were in the schoolroom, the others ill with grippe.

The school-teacher, a tall, horizon-blue-clad Frenchman, with kind eyes and a decoration on his breast, had just finished the dictation. Its subject was *de la viande* (concerning meat). Looking at the copy-book of the nearest little boy, very blue-eyed, I read *de la fiande*, and his dictation was further embellished by sounds reminiscent of German rule. "*Chez le bourgé, le tinton, le charcutier, le boutin, le zocisse,*" but as I said, that's their German ear—and little by little it will be done away with and "French as she is spoke" will take its place. One small boy who wrote a beautiful, copper-plate hand was stone-deaf, but he had dear, questioning eyes and something patient in his being. I asked, when we came out, if nothing could be done for him. But the master said, with a terrible finality, "His father is an alcoholic."

It is evidently not without result that they distil their *quetsch* and their *kirsch*, their rose haws and their gentian, and everything else that has the merest embryo of a fruit or a berry or leaf in these pleasant valleys; as to which the bright-eyed, Italian-looking curé initiated us further, as you will see.

Leaving the school, we went to the church, beautifully familiar to me against the sky, but completely and,

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from our point of view, hopelessly modernized within; though I couldn't help feeling that for those who come from dingy farms and dung-heaps the crude splendor of that house of God must be greatly comforting.

The old ossuary chapel nearby, with its fifteenth-century vaulting, was crowded with beautiful things from the church at Thann. The carvings on the choir stalls, of the most delicate workmanship, were amusing to boot, nothing human being foreign to the artists that made them. One figure forming an arm-rest had a swollen cheek bound up in a cloth, and, furthermore, he evidently had an ache in the center of his being, for he was doubled up, his hands pressed close to his person in the classic position of one so suffering. Another showed a man leaning over, with delicately modeled back, his head in his hands, but *his* ache was very manifestly spiritual. Another had a goiter, and monkeys and parrots abounded, the native fancy of the fifteenth century evidently being out on a loose snaffle. A celebrated row of musical angels were so delicately carved, with cymbal and harp and bugle and lyre and flute, that they would be well placed in some vitrine rather than high on a choir stall in a dim Gothic church. The celebrated statue in stone of Saint-Théobald from the column of his fountain at Thann had been brought here for safety, too, and I fingered it as well as many another thing generally beyond reach.

As we came out, the clock in the tower of the church struck three. The great and disastrous Austrian war-act was finished.

It was a moment beyond words, and as we walked silently over to the curé's house I thought of the cruel, interminable lists of dead and wounded and missing in the Vienna newspapers that winter of 1915, when the Russians were flooding Galicia and spilling over the ridges of the Carpathians. The curé, however, young,

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with fine, Italian face-bones, and frayed and spotted cassock, somewhat changed our thoughts by bringing out various of the thirty-four specimens of distilled liqueurs which are the pride and playthings of these valleys, explaining to us with snapping eyes special variations of his distillings. Holding a bottle and a glass up against the light in his long, thin *primitif* hands, he poured me slowly something wrested from the mountain-ash (I had thought I might as well have a completely new sensation), and I went about the rest of the afternoon feeling as if a hot stone were lodged in my breast.

Arrived at Masevaux, we drove to a house on the Place du Chapitre, where I found another interior of the kind I am now familiar with—that of the high and comfortable Alsatian bourgeoisie.

Madame Chagué, large, white-haired, energetic, intelligent, agreeable, received us flanked by an amiable married daughter and a thin, upstanding veteran, his ribbon of honor in his buttonhole. But, to be perfectly frank, the veterans get on my nerves. It's the picture of what the gorgeous young heroes of our great war will be one day, *sans* eyes, *sans* teeth, *sans* hair, *sans* everything, and *toutes les fins sont tristes*.

"Now," said Madame Chagué when once started and tea had been poured (accompanied by cakes you don't get a chance to serve unless you are *délibéré*, and you have to be well delivered, or else never in bondage, to get the chance to eat them), "the government must proceed with a good deal of caution as well as consideration. The Alsatians aren't like anybody but themselves. They mustn't lay hands on our little ideas and ways, '*ces Messieurs de l'Administration ont compris cela*' [with an appreciative look at Bernard]. We held on all these years, awaiting the day of deliverance. *Enfin*, for two generations we have looked on the reconquest of Alsace as the coming of heaven upon earth, as if that

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once come to pass, there would be nothing more to desire."

She said all these things with an appraising light in her eye; being a clever old lady, in the four years since she had been "delivered," she had doubtless found that life is life—even though there is a great choice as to whom one wants to live it out with, and how.

About this time the veteran was encouraged to tell a few of his 1870 experiences, and I felt as my grandchildren, if I ever have any, will feel when the veterans of 1918 will tell what they did "single-handed in the trenches," or how, "as the only man left of their regiment," they had held back the invaders, or how they hid in a barn and let them go by and then gave the alarm, "and a whole battalion had to surrender," or what know I? Politely, but without eagerness, I listened, the 1870 veterans almost "spoiling the war" for me, with their eternal illustration of the flatness of not dying on the battlefield. I tried to bring the conversation back to 1918—leaving a rather long and not very clear account of how he kept his ancient, beloved, red *képi* under glass, or next his heart, or pressed in an album, I rather forget which. I wanted to hear the story of the famous entry of the *Pantalons Rouges* into Masevaux on August 7, 1914, where they have been ever since, though now changed into this celestial blue, which decorates the earth (as I have frequently said, and doubtless will again) as never before has it been decorated by any men of any age or any war. Pictures of "*La Guerre en Dentelles*," or gallooned and be-caped and be-frogged officers with lances or drawn swords on horseback, charging the enemy in the typical poses of Lasalle, or "*La Vieille Garde*," or Wellington or Blücher at Waterloo, or anything else that ever was, are dull beside the strange, appealing beauty of the blue battalions of the twentieth century.

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I listened to Madame Chagué telling of the glad reception of those who entered Masevaux on that 7th of August, houses and hearts flung wide open, how everywhere the upper windows were crowded with women and children leaning out to see them come over the dark mountains and along the bright roads. Many left that same night, as they did from Thann and Bitschwiller and Moosch and all the towns about, marching on to Mulhouse, which they took only to be driven out, and since then many red-trousered ghosts walk the otherwise unmythical, industrial streets of Mulhouse. Three weeks later Mulhouse was again entered, and again, with many losses, other red pantaloons were driven out, since which the chimneys of Mulhouse have smoked a German smoke to a German heaven.

Madame Chagué is very Catholic, too, and bristles at the bare idea of any government, even the "Tiger's," taking liberties with the ancient faith. They want a bishop of their own, an Alsatian shepherd—"faut pas nous boussuler dans nos petites habitudes"—she kept repeating. I wondered what the Tiger and all the imitation tigers would say when they come to learn just how they feel here. There's the most Gordian of knots awaiting them, for it appears that the Germans gave three thousand marks a year to each curé, and the French government, less enamoured of the ministers of God, doesn't give any. However, that is only one of a series of knots on a very long string, and patient and very deft fingers will be needed for the untying.

In each of these comfortable houses authentic ancestors look from the walls, ancestors who knew the Thirty Years' War, or the Napoleonic campaigns, or 1870, or ancestors-to-be who have seen the World War. And all the dwellers of these large-roomed, high-roofed, deep-windowed houses, having been delivered, in turn deliver themselves of their sensations, thoughts, emotions, acts,

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on being delivered. One might, I dimly foresaw, do to one's breast what the wedding guest did to his when he heard the loud bassoon. That I may not seem unkind, I want to say another last word about the veterans, the so often toothless, bent, sightless, forgetful veterans. They would be all right in themselves, if they weren't so horribly illustrative. They seem to be saying all the time, "If Mortality doesn't get you one way, it does another," till you think that short agony on the battlefield, and long glory, are greatly preferable to decay and no glory. And no veteran will keep this my little book on the table by his bed. He would know, too well, that I am right.

Later, as I slipped across the cobbly square to my house, and mounted the broad oaken stairway to my room, a feeling of nostalgia possessed me at the thought of leaving Alsace, to which but a few short days before I had seemed so unrelated. This bit of French history in the making, molded by the men of the grave, kind eyes, whose comradeship with one another is so unfailing and whose courtesy to me is so exquisite, had become dear to me, and, too, I was looking on something that would never be again. The web was shifting, other figures were to be woven in it. Fate was to pull new things as well as old out from its storehouse and proceed with its endless combinations. Masevaux, capital of Alsace Reconquered, would be overshadowed by Strasbourg, by Metz, by Colmar, by Mulhouse. But it will have had again a little day, which is all an individual or a town can reasonably ask, standing under the changeless stars.

As I went to the *popote*, low over the houses stretched the Great Bear, so vast, so splendid, that it seemed almost alone in a heaven growing misty toward its edges, though Alcor, the Starry Horseman, was twinkling strangely bright close to Mizar. But the autumnal



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stars hanging over the rich-colored hills of Alsace have not the brilliancy of those that I saw above the gray-white Châlons plain, that late, red October of 1917.

After dinner Commandant Poulet drew on my map the boundaries of *Alsace Reconquise*, as it is now, this fourth day of November. But as he drew I knew he was feeling that it was a fleeting, vanishing thing he was recording, for he stopped a moment, as a man might stop following a wind or tracing a line in water.

Then as we sat, some half-dozen of us, about the dining-table, under the hard light of the Oberforster's chandelier, the commandant, flicking his cigar ash into the Oberforster's dreadful ash-receiver, told me something of the history of the Mission, which is briefly this.

Though French troops entered the valleys of the Doller, the Thur, and the Largue on the 7th of August, 1914, the French administration of that little triangle of Alsace Reconquered, as I found it, was organized only in November of the same year. Its first form was purely military, the authorities responsible for the civil population being also in command of the military operations, the final word in all that concerned Alsace coming from the general in command of the Seventh Army, in whose sector it was. These were successively Generals de Maud'huy, Villaret, Debeney, and de Boissaudy. The little triangle was first divided into two territories only, that of the valley of the Largue, with Dannemarie as its capital, that of the valley of the Thur with Thann as capital. Masevaux at that time did not form a distinct territory, but was an annex, as it were, of Thann, as also was St.-Amarin.

The officers administering the territories were chosen mostly from the reserve—men whose former avocations had prepared them for the various rôles they were to fill in Alsace. They were members of the *Conseil d'Etat*, of the *Cour des Comptes*, magistrates, *Gardes des Forêts*

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*et des Eaux*, together with many others belonging to technical professions. The first *Capitaine Administrateur* was Captain Heurtel, in civil life *Maître des Requêtes au Conseil d'Etat*. Though seriously wounded at the very beginning of the war, in December of 1914, he asked to be again sent to the front. He met his death at Verdun in 1916. His successor was Commandant Poulet, *Conseiller d'Etat*, who took up office on Christmas Day, 1914.

In July, 1917, the Mission was detached from the General Headquarters and placed under the Ministry of War. Its new name, expressive of enlarged activities, was changed to *Mission Militaire Administrative en Alsace* (Military Administrative Mission in Alsace), the central office being transferred to Masevaux, which Fate had placed half-way between St.-Amarin at one end of the reconquered triangle and Dannemarie at the other.

Ever since, in and out of the building of the German *Kommandantur*, once the nave of the old Abbey, men clad in horizon-blue have been coming and going, busied about affairs after the French way, the ancient town of Masevaux entering into the unexpected enjoyment of what might be called an Indian summer. Nothing else has happened to it, so far as I can see, since the Revolution, when the Chapter was suppressed and the Goddess Reason briefly installed in the Abbey. And Masevaux loves and cherishes its brief glory as only lovely and transient things are loved and cherished.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> After the signing of the armistice and the French occupation of the two provinces in their entirety, another reorganization became necessary. To each of the three divisions of Alsace-Lorraine was sent a *Commissaire de la République*—the Commandant (I had almost said my Commandant) Poulet was given charge of Upper Alsace with residence in the ancient and comely town of Colmar. To Lower Alsace with residence at Strasbourg was appointed M. le Conseiller d'Etat Maringer with the title of High Commissioner, and to M. Mirman, the celebrated Mayor of Nancy, was given Lorraine with residence at Metz.

## VIII

### LUNCHEON AT BITSCHWILLER. THE MISSION IN RESIDENCE AT ST.-AMARIN. SAINT-ODILE

**N**OVEMBER 5th.—Awakened early, early by the sound of heavy firing. Later, looking out of the square, I see the market in full swing. Against the inn of Les Lions d'Or, with its comfortable courtyard and two red wings, stands a wagon-load of hay with a pale-green cover thrown over it. Carts of cabbages and carrots, drawn by white oxen, are pulled up under the yellowing trees. The black of the clothes of the women making their purchases cuts in very hard. Blue-clad men come and go; several motors are standing before the door of the Administration. The shining, diffused light of the mist-hidden sun rounds every corner and fills up every space with a pleasant softness.

At eleven I start out with the commandant, Captain Sérin, and Lieutenant Laferrière to motor to Thann through a world of rust and green and gold-colored hills, under the whitest of heavens. So soft and shining is the beauty of the lovely earth, and so soon to pass into the winter, that I say to the commandant how like the transient beauty of a woman of forty-five are these delicate, hazy hills with their cashmere shawls still twisted about their shoulders, drawn up over their heads, dropping down to their green-valleyed feet. I mean the woman of forty-five who is still loved.

Again we stopped on the crest between the valleys of Masevaux and of Thann, and again we stopped and

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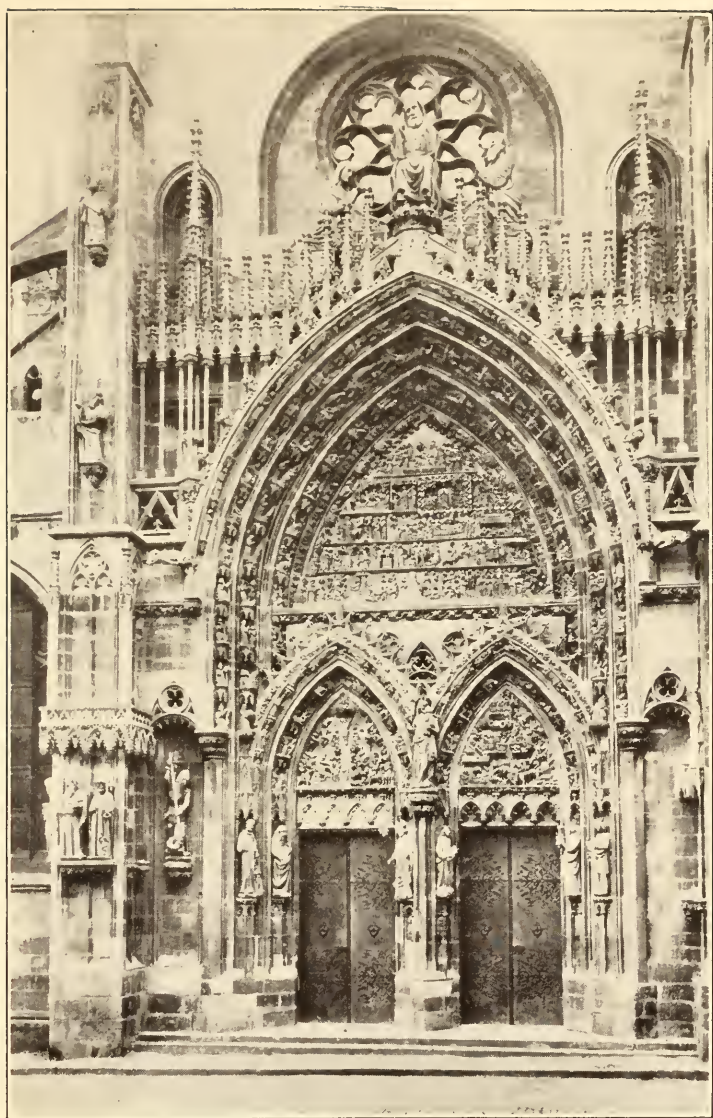
peered through the wire-and-pine screen, out toward Mulhouse and the Rhine and the Black Forest. The valley was blue and shining. Even the windows of the great, white building of the *Idioten-Anstalt*, where the Germans are bivouacked, were visible. Beyond were the high towers of their potassium-works. As those three men stood looking out over the rich plain I thought, "Always will I remember the officers of the Mission like that, standing on the heights, shading their eyes with their hands as they looked down into the land of Egypt, wherein the Lord was to lead them. . . ."

New shell-holes were all about us, and there was a sharp, continual reverberation of cannon among the cashmere-shawled hills.

At Thann we stopped for a moment by the fountain near the church (in peace-times, the old statue of St.-Théobald that I saw at Sewen surmounts the charming column), the commandant having been saluted by a young American officer, leading by the hand a little girl of seven or eight, in Alsatian costume—huge black bow, black velvet bodice, full white skirts. He was quite simply a young man whose parents had gone to America, he himself had fought on the Mexican border, got his commission, and was proudly—oh, so proudly and so smilingly—walking his native streets of Thann with his little niece.

We are *en route* to lunch with M. and Madame Galland, at Bitschwiller, who receive us as agreeable people of the world receive their guests in all quarters of the globe. They were of those who could have gone, yet remained, during the many bombardments of the town—*noblesse oblige*, and have been a blessing to the valley.

Madame Galland, with powdered hair, slender, delicate of feature and of form, dressing older than she is, might have looked out of a Latour pastel. M. Galland, too, is fine-featured, well groomed, agreeable, and



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there was a handsome daughter with a quietly sorrowful expression on her young face. It is a house from every one of whose many wide windows one saw gold leaves hanging on black branches, behind them warm, rust-colored hills, traced with pale-yellow larches and stamped with black patterns of pine. Within, the rooms were beautiful with blue-clad men. There was an agreeable and suave odor of kindness and unstintingness about the house, mingling with that of the ease of people of the world, and the surety of those in authority, altogether a *good* house. Eight or ten officers besides ourselves sat down to the usual delicious and abundant Alsatian luncheon, the conversation intimate enough to have color, general enough not to exclude the stranger within the gates. And it ran after this way, beginning with accounts of that last day of July, 1914, when *Kriegsgefahrzustand* had been proclaimed in the valley and they were completely cut off from the outer world, witnessing only the sinister passing and repassing of regiments of dragoons and detachments of artillery. M. Galland had procured all the flour and dried vegetables possible at Mulhouse to ration the population of Bitschwiller in case of need, and collected what money he could. The days passed in suspense, till the 6th of August, when they remarked much coming and going of troops; on the 7th the German cavalry was seen beating a hasty retreat.

A *Brigadier de Chasseurs*, mounted on a great black horse, is the first Frenchman they see, advancing alone, looking slowly about him, his revolver in his hands, fearing some snare. Then the *Pantalons Rouges* pour into the valley, flowers at every bayonet and in every tunic, and the Gallands receive the first French general to enter Alsace since 1870, General Superbie, commanding the 41st Brigade. At two o'clock, after refreshments had been offered from every house, the regiment took

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the road to Mulhouse, where that same night many of them had their "rendezvous with death."

The talk then fell on that mysterious thing called luck, and how the soldier must have it, be *chançard*, if he were to come through, and of generals who, like General Liautey, wouldn't have under them any save notoriously lucky officers. And there was much heedless joking (with the Fates perhaps listening). I, who never say even within myself, "I *will* do thus and so," without adding "if God will," remarked at last, propitiatingly, that "'twas somewhat difficult to tell *beforehand* who was going to be lucky."

"But for military purposes," dryly remarked an officer who had not yet spoken, "one needs to be lucky only as long as the war lasts," which being hideously true, we turned to the less elusive subject of the rich and easy living of the peasants in this part of the world since the war, and how they, even like unto those other tens of thousands of "war-workers," will "miss" it. They had become accustomed to the troops, and there was the thrice blessed *popote* in which they more or less shared. And when the Americans came things were still better in a still better world. For they were very free with their money (though no one could understand a word that they said), and then they went, and the French troops came again, and there was something very pleasant about their return. Though they didn't have the money of the Americans, they could be conversed with and they would lend a hand in the garden, and were always joking with the children, and helped with the crops, and the virtues of the Americans, if not their money, were somewhat forgotten. They were, in places, even remembered as a nuisance, wanting everything cleared up, stupid bores about the dung-heap, "and will you believe it, Monsieur," one of them said to Laferrière, "they even washed their dishes with



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*soap*, and you couldn't give the dishwater to the pigs!"

After which I related Colonel Burnside's "best short story," also concerning the peasant point of view. When he was in Lorraine with his men, at the well-named watery (not watering) place called Demanges-aux-Eaux, a delegation of villagers waited on him, with the complaint that the Americans made so much noise at night that the *sheep* couldn't sleep!

And we finished luncheon gaily, to the rather distant sound of German guns, with the story of the wife of a (or probably the) French soap manufacturer in Tonquin who came to the Gallands' for convalescence after "war-strain." How she charmed them with her singing, especially of children's songs, delighted them with the reserve and modesty of her conduct, and after two months turned out to have been once a well-known, café-chantant singer with the proverbial "past and many brilliant presents," enjoying a glimpse of home-life in Alsace.

Coffee was poured by the handsome daughter, who with her firm yet delicate profile, and rich, dark hair drawn heavily back, looked like some model for a head on a bank-note or medallion. Her mother, saying to me, "*Vous êtes femme de cœur*," took me apart and told me her history.

And perhaps because so much had been buried in the great war of youthful love and hope, I may record a little of this story; its grief is typical in simplicity and purity of many countless thousands in this land of France.

For months she had been beloved by a handsome young *chasseur* stationed with his regiment at Bitschwiller, one of many officers to frequent the hospitable house of the Gallands. His photograph on a table shows him tall, broad-shouldered, straight-eyed, kind-

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mouthed. On account of the uncertainties of his life he did not declare himself while there, but immediately afterward, doubtless because of some presentiment, he wrote to the mother telling of his love. This was found to be returned and they became fiancés.

A few weeks after he was killed in Flanders, in one of the Mont Kemmel combats, a ball striking him in the forehead as he leaped from a trench to lead a counter-attack.

He was one of ten sons. Six of his brothers had fallen, too. Awed, I asked concerning her who had borne them, but she had gone to her grave long before the World War; though I knew her not, thinking of the mother of the Maccabees, and many like her, I thanked God that those seven wounds had been spared a mother's heart. Then we returned to the young girl's story.

"But never to have looked into each other's eyes and exchanged the glance of love," I said, "it's a shadowy and heavy grief for her youth to bear. Would it not have been better for them to have been united?"

The mother answered, after a pause, "There was no time."

"But this can't be the end for her; she's only beginning life!" I said, and thought of the great, sorrowing hosts of these young widows of the heart alone, and of the vexed question in their families, as to whether it was better to become a widow or remain a maid.

"She said to me only the other day, 'I have all that I need for my whole life.'"

"She will find that the heart is not like that," I cried; "it doesn't seem able to content itself even with the sweetest and holiest things of memory. It's forever reaching out."

For a moment we stood with clasped hands, looking out to the hills whence despair had so often come, and

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Madame Galland added, quite simply, "Fifty thousand sleep around about us."

For one of the many-colored hills, pressing close to the broad windows of the salons, separated us from the Molkenrain and the sacramental Hartmannswillerkopf.

In the nearest, that rises without any perspective immediately from the house, is an old quarry, and it is there that since four years the workers in M. Galland's factory are sheltered during the frequent bombardments of the town, for in what once was used for constructing spinning-machines eleven million shells have been turned out, all of which is quite well known to the enemy.

The pleasant odor of the house followed us to the motor and even as we rolled swiftly down the valley of the Thur, past Moosch, against whose hill, still like a picture tilted back, lies the military cemetery, cut out of the rust and gold-colored hill, with its black splashes of pines. Again peace to those who lie there.

Everywhere negro troops, sitting, standing, leaning, lying (a good deal of leaning and lying). An occasional forlorn-looking white officer. It is the same Fifteenth New York Infantry.

"I am told they were all, before they were drafted, lift-boys and newsboys and bootblacks and railway-car porters," said one of the officers.

"You mustn't class these last with the others. You don't know the majesty and authority of the Pullman-car porter. He's as final as the Germans think the Fourteen Points are," I answered.

I had felt myself somewhat exotic when I arrived in Masevaux; but I'm blotted into the landscape, one with Alsace, compared to these sons of Ham, clad in khaki, who fill the blue-and-gold valley of the Thur.

Then we roll into the long street of the village of St.-Amarin, named after the saint to whom a saint friend

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said, upon seeing him about to make himself scarce at the approach of assassins, "*If you miss this opportunity for martyrdom, you may never get another!*" (It all depends on what you want and what your friends can do for you, and it isn't a bit like politics.) But I'll tell the story of St.-Amarin another time.

The town that bears his name is long and rambling. There is a pink church tower surmounted by a slate-roofed top, shaped something like a turban with a point like those on helmets, and there is the fountain bearing the date 1830, and on its column is perched the Gallic cock, and it is the pride of the long street and vies with the church square as a meeting-place.

But this is 1918 and the commandant, who loves St.-Amarin, as I can see by the gentle, almost affectionate way he looks about, shows me first the cinematograph, in a sort of club for soldiers. It has been a Mecca of warmth and comfort since three years for those coming down from frozen mountain-sides. Pictures by George Scott (good pictures) decorate it, and fancy is unbridled where the enemy is concerned.

The Crown Prince is represented in a *loge* with a voluptuous actress twice his size, and, furthermore, the artist, not content with mere paint and canvas, has given him real wooden legs which dangle from the painted sides of the painted *loge*. The Prince of ——— said to an officer showing him about, "And even so you have flattered my cousin."

Franz Joseph, shrunken by years, is represented huddled up in another *loge*, with another actress, but it didn't strike me as funny, nor did it recall in any way the tales of his very unspectacular friendship with the faithful Kâthe Schratt.

A little way down the street is the pleasant officers' club, with books and papers, deep chairs and long

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divans. I dwell a little on the comfort of it all, thinking what it has meant to half or entirely frozen men coming down from those relentless winter heights.

Then we go to the Bureaux de l'Administration across the way, which had been the headquarters of the "Mission Militaire d'Alsace" until it was transferred to Masevaux a year ago.

It, too, is in what was once the Oberforster's house, only *its* walls had been hung by the commandant with ancient souvenirs picked up in the valley; old engravings of Alsatian generals, Rapp, Kléber, and Lefèvre, Duke of Dantzic, this last vanquished husband of Madame Sans-Gêne as well as victorious general of France. And there are some old engravings of the portals of the church at Thann, and 1860 street scenes, with bombazined women and high-collared men. An enormous flag of Louis Philippe decorates one corner, and many horns and antlers of the Oberforster's time hang in the entrance-hall. There is a busy, pleasant coming and going of men who like their work.

More officers are presented, and there is much joking about our Masevaux *popote* and odious comparisons. We tell them proudly of the new coffee-pot, but the haughty chef of the St.-Amarin *popote* answers that it was needed, and probably we had at last heard what people really thought about the coffee at the Masevaux mess. I am to lunch here on Thursday and see—or rather, *taste!*

And all love St.-Amarin and its wide valley, even those who now live at Masevaux.

Home by the Route Joffre with Sérin and Laferrière. A rising up over indigo mountains, blackening at their base, blotted against the strange white sky, white even now at sunset, then a drop into the dark valley of Masevaux, talking of politics, theirs and mine, things of wisdom and valiance done or undone. And the end

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in sight. Though Laferrière said: "I am not sure that they will feel so conquered. They will proudly record the dates of their great victories, and their historians will tell of their sweeping invasions; one must confess they have had great generals. They will doubtless reproach their statesmen with not having made better alliances, and decry their *gaffes*. But as for fighting, they will feel that men may fight one to two, one to three or to four or even five, but that no one can fight the world. *Tenez*, for Napoleon, after Waterloo, there was nothing more personally, but his victories remain among the great military glories of history." On the crest as we started to drop into the valley, in that pale, pale sky above a blue, blue hill, something almost like words was written in delicate gold, in long looping characters, by the unseen, setting sun. I know not what they spelled, but I think it was Peace, lovely Peace. . . .

Thinking my day fairly over, I had just taken off my things and lain me down when word was brought up that Captain Bernard was waiting for me. Put on my hat in total blackness, the electric light again out all over Masevaux, my candle snuffed, and in a darkness which conceals the whereabouts of the match-box, as well as minor accessories like gloves and veil, I depart to take tea at another large manufacturer's, where I find more handsome girls of the coming generation. Delicious little bobbin-shaped doughnuts, called *shankelé*, are served with tea, and there was brought out a great tricolor flag whose staff was surmounted with the eagle of Napoleon III. It was of matchless, uncrushable silk, dipped in unfading dyes. After Sedan, like many and many another, it had been put in a long box and nailed against the beams in the attic, remaining so hidden until the visit of President Poincaré in the winter of 1915.

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Then home through black and muddy streets, full of hurrying, stumbling forms. Later the cheerful *popote*.

And then before I went to sleep I read again the story of Saint-Odile according to Edouard Schuré, and it runs somewhat like this:<sup>1</sup>

At the end of the seventh century a powerful Frank of the Rhine Valley, Atalric, was named Duke of Alsace by Childeric II, one of the last of the Merovingian kings.

He was like many of his kind, fierce and implacable, worshiping neither pagan divinities nor the one God.

He dwelt in a great castle near the town of Obernay in the Vosges, and here one day he received the visit of an Irish monk and gave him shelter, according to the custom of the time.

Thinking to improve the opportunity, the duke said to him:

“Those who wear the priestly garb boast of miraculous powers. If that be true, demand of thy God that my wife Bereswinde, now with child, bear me a son and heir.”

At that the monk threw himself on his knees, remaining long in prayer in spite of Atalric's impatience.

When at last the holy man arose, he said:

“No one can change the will of Heaven. Thy wife will bring forth a daughter, and thy life will be one long struggle with her. But in the end the dove will vanquish the lion.”

Atalric's first thought was to have the unpleasant prophet well flogged, but he finally contented himself by chasing him from the castle to the accompaniment of his choicest maledictions.

When, a few days later, the gentle Bereswinde in fear and trembling (her lord having made no secret of what he expected) gave birth to a blind daughter, such a rage possessed Atalric that the dwellers in the castle

<sup>1</sup> Edouard Schuré, *L'Alsace Française, Rêves et Combats*.

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thought their last hour had come. Bereswinde's feelings are not recorded. The duke declared loudly that he did not intend to endure such dishonor, and that if the child were not promptly hidden he would with his own hands make away with it.

Fortunately Bereswinde had a sister who was abbess of the Convent of Baume-les-Dames in Burgundy. To her the child was sent, and the legend has it that Odile recovered her sight at the touch of the baptismal waters, thus symbolizing the opening of her eyes to spiritual light in the darkness of a barbarian age.

She was tenderly reared by the abbess, who, however, told her nothing of her princely birth, letting her think she was the child of parents killed in war, though, as she grew in years and beauty, she was treated as a princess; her charm and gentleness were so great that it was recorded that birds and even deer would eat from her hands as she wandered in the forest clearings. Often at night in her cell she had strange and beautiful visions. The most frequent was that of an angel of shining though severe visage, who would appear presenting her now with roses, now with lilies, the perfume enfolding her as if in some heavenly felicity. But once as day was about to break she had quite a different vision. It was that of a proud and beautiful adolescent who wore, as did the Frankish lords of the times, a gray tunic with a leathern girdle, while his golden hair fell freely about his shoulders. His long sword was suspended from a strap decorated with shining plaques of gold. The purple border of his tunic showed him indeed to be a prince, and in his mien there was both pride and gentleness.

Odile's heart leaped up and she was about to address him when suddenly he vanished, and the angel of the austere visage took his place, holding out a cross of ebony on which hung an ivory Christ. The next night,



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and many after, the young lord returned. At last he came carrying in his hands a crown of gold. Odile was about to grasp it, when the angel, graver and sterner than before, stepped between them and presented to Odile a jeweled chalice. Thinking she was to partake of the Saving Host, Odile pressed it to her lips. What was her horror when she found it filled with blood still hot and throbbing. So great was her trouble that on awakening she recounted her dream to the abbess, who then revealed to her the secret of her birth. How her gentle mother, worn by the harsh tempers of the duke, was long since dead, and her father had sworn never to look upon her face. The image in the dream was that of her young brother, Adalbert, born after her, and heir to the duchy. "But," added the abbess, "beware of seeking out thy fierce father; thy mother is no longer there to defend thee. Stay rather here, for thou art destined at my death to become abbess of this convent."

But Odile was so deeply moved by this glimpse of the glory of her race and the promise of fraternal love that she could not resist the desire to contemplate with her earthly eyes the brother whose image had so enchanted her, to enfold him, if even for a single time, in her arms. By a faithful servitor she despatched a letter to him, saying in it: "I am Odile, thine unknown sister. If thou lovest me as I thee, obtain from my father that I enter into my daughterly estate. I salute thee tenderly. At thought of thee my heart blossoms like a lily in the desert."

This letter acted as a charm upon Adalbert, awaking in his youthful heart all generous and romantic sentiments. He cried, "Who is this sister whose words are sweeter than those of a betrothed?"

A tender desire seized him to make her his companion and coheir and to give her back her rank and family

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estate. He answered, "Trust but in me. I will arrange all things for the best."

Shortly after, while his father was absent at the chase, he sent to Baume-les-Dames a splendid chariot drawn by six richly caparisoned horses. With it went a numerous retinue, that Odile might return to her father's house in a way befitting her estate. And now begins the tragedy.

Atalric is in the banquet-hall of his castle of Obernay, where his birthday is being celebrated with great pomp and circumstance. It is the day, too, that he has chosen to present his son and heir to his vassals. About the tables, groaning under the weight of gold and silver dishes, his many courtiers are sitting, drinking from great horns of aurochs or clanking their burnished hanaps. Atalric, happening to go to the window, espies in the plain a chariot approaching, drawn by six horses; banners are flying and palms waving. Above it float the ducal colors.

He cries out in surprise, "Who is it that approaches?"

Adalbert answers with all the valiance of his young and trusting heart, "It is thy daughter Odile come to beg thy mercy."

"Who is the dolt that counseled her return?"

"It is I who called her, and on this day of thy feast I beg thy grace for her."

"How has she, who desires my death, been able to bewitch you?" cries Atalric, pale and stiff with anger.

Adalbert protests, invoking his father's pity, the honor of the family, and his own brotherly love, but Atalric, beside himself, commands the youth to cast his sister from the threshold. Adalbert refuses.

"If it must be done, do it thyself," he answers, proudly. Upon this the duke menaces his son with disinheritance if he does not immediately obey. But Adalbert, drawing his sword, lays it at his father's feet, telling him

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that rather than fail in fraternal love he will give up his heritage. This fills his father with so blind a fury that he gives his son a great blow upon the temple with the hilt of his sword.

The stroke is mortal, and Adalbert falls to the ground. The vassals crowd in fear at one end of the great hall, while Atalric stands alone, petrified by the horror of his crime.

At this moment in the fullness of her young beauty, dressed as a bride for her nuptials, Odile enters the hall. A single look suffices. She gives a great cry and throws herself on her knees by her dying brother. She clasps his bleeding head, she kisses his glazing eyes, and in that single kiss, that one despairing embrace, the pain of the whole world transpierces her gentle breast. It is the chalice of blood the angel once put to her lips. The dreadful crime of her father, the loss of her adored brother, to whom she had been mystically united by a more than fraternal bond, turn all her desires to the other world; the first young innocent love of family is changed into solicitude for all who are suffering in that barbarian world. Her novitiate begins.

Atalric, devoured by remorse, though still impenitent, did not dare cast his daughter out, but he spoke no word to her, harboring always in his heart the prediction of the Irish monk, "The dove will overcome the lion."

In order to avoid him, Odile spent her days mostly in the great forests that surrounded the castle, often climbing to the heights of Altitona. Under the shadow of those great trees, high as the nave of some cathedral, she no longer heard the striking of the hours of human time. All things appeared to her under the guise of eternity. Her beautiful brother, her unique love, was dead, almost as a martyr. Why should she not in turn gather for herself a palm like to that he carried as he roamed the heavenly fields?

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One day, as she was deeply meditating these things, she found herself midway up the great hill, when, enveloped in a blinding light, the angel of her dreams in the convent of Burgundy suddenly appeared. His wings, touched with glory, were widely unfolded, and his face shone like the sun. With an imperious yet protecting gesture he pointed to the top of the mountain, where were seen the crumbling remains of a Roman camp, saying to her soul, "There, Odile, is thy home; there shalt thou dwell and gather to thee others whose thoughts are holy and whose wills are bent to service."

Odile remained long in ecstasy. When she had recovered her fleshly sight the angel was gone, but she had understood. On the heights of Altitona she was to build a sanctuary which should be a refuge of peace, a fortress of prayer, a citadel of God. It was vocation.

Strangely increased in beauty, she returned at night-fall to the castle, and this added beauty was observed by all.

Shortly after Atalric, through pride and also to get rid of her, conceived the design of marrying her to a great Austrasian lord from Metz, then his guest, who had been struck by love for her. He called her to him, and told her his intention. She answered gently:

"Father, thou canst not give me to any man. Thou knowest I am vowed to Christ alone."

The duke, enraged at her resistance, but grown somewhat wary by experience, sought out a docile monk and commanded him to impress upon Odile the wisdom of obedience, by which she might placate him and even win his heart. But all was in vain. Then he conceived the black idea of delivering his daughter by force into the arms of the Austrasian lord, thinking, once she had been embraced by the lover, she would consent to marriage. He sent two armed men to seize her in a grotto where she was accustomed to pray. Hard-

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ened by the fierce design that filled his heart, he cried out when she was brought before him, "The Lord of Austrasia awaits thee for betrothal; willingly or unwillingly thou shalt be his."

Odile, knowing the supreme moment had come, answered: "Thou hast already killed thy son. Wouldst thou also cause the death of thy daughter? If thou bindest me to the arms of this man I will not survive my shame, but I will kill myself. Thus thou wilt be the cause not only of the death of my body, but of my soul as well, and thou wilt thyself be destined to eternal damnation."

"Little care I for the other world. In this I am and will remain the master."

"That in truth thou art," she answered, gently, "but listen to me and recognize the goodness of my God. Allow me instead to build a sanctuary upon the heights of Altitona; thou wilt thus be delivered from me for all time. There I, and those gathered with me, will pray for thee. I feel a strange power within me."

Atalric made a violent gesture, but she continued without flinching, "Menace me, trample me underfoot, but tremble before this image," and she took from her bosom the ivory Christ hanging from the ebon cross.

In that moment, as father and daughter faced each other, the powers of heaven and hell, of spiritual promise and unregenerate will, were arrayed in combat. But Atalric did not at first give way. Suddenly, however, the countenance of Odile became more terrible than that of a warrior, and her whole mien was wrapped in an angelic majesty. In her dilated eyes Atalric thought for an instant that he saw the bleeding image of his murdered son. An intolerable pain filled his heart, and he cried out under the irresistible pressure of the heavenly will: "Thou hast conquered. Do as thou wilt, but never let me look upon thy face."

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“Thou wilt see me in the other life,” answered his child.

The legend adds that Atalric, regretting his moment of weakness, did not immediately renounce his evil designs. Odile was obliged to flee before his increasing wrath and was pursued by him and the Austrasian lord, accompanied by many armed men, even beyond the Rhine.

But at the moment when they were about to seize her, at the foot of a mountain where there seemed no issue, the rock parted suddenly and received her. A few minutes later it again opened and Odile appeared enveloped in a supernatural light, declaring to her awestruck pursuers that she belonged forever to Christ alone. Then Atalric and the Austrasian lord turned silently and left the spot. The dove had conquered the lion.

The legend has transformed her father's momentary conversion to her will into the physical image of the suddenly sundered rock. But in the end it is all the same, for Odile, *Vierge Candide et Forte*, represents forever the victory of the transfigured soul over brute force, the incalculable power of faith sealed by sacrifice, the saving breath of the invisible world breathed into the visible.

During centuries the great Benedictine Convent of Mount Saint-Odile (Odilienberg) performed its works of faith and mansuetude in that barbarian and ruthless world; the voices of Taran, the God of War, and of Rosmertha, the Goddess of Life and Love, according to the pagan ways, were replaced by another, promising eternal felicities to those born again in Christ.

From a wall of *grès rose*, this same *grès rose* that I have found as building-stone for temple and home and fountain all over Alsace, Odile, needing one day to give instant refreshment to an old man spent with fatigue,

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caused the spring of crystal water to gush forth from which pilgrims still drink. And in the Chapel, called that of Tears, is a deeply indented stone, worn, it is said, by the knees of the saint as she knelt there praying for the release of the soul of her father (long dead and unpenitent) from the pains of purgatory. The legend has it that only toward the end of her life was she able to accomplish this, when at last the chalice of blood the angel once gave her was transmuted into an elixir of eternal life.

The redemption of the soul of Atalric signifies, too, the conversion of the Merovingian world to Christianity, and to a new will to give up life that it might be found again—and many other things that it is difficult to tell of in words, but the soul can perceive them.

And on the Odilienberg has beat for centuries the very heart, as it were, of Alsace; above its throb being laid, passionately, now a hand from the West, now one from the East. . . .

To this day, they who at evening ascend its heights and wander under the lindens of the terrace built above the old pagan wall, looking out upon the splendid panorama of the Vosges, breathe the mystical fragrance of the lily and the rose that perfumed the last sigh of Saint-Odile.

These things I am not able to know of myself, for the Odilienberg is still in German hands.

## IX

### THE "FIELD OF LIES" AND LAIMBACH

*Faro come colui che piange.*—DANTE

NOVEMBER 6th.—And to-morrow I am to pass into the sweet, broad valley of the Thur and there dwell. I ask neither how nor why, knowing it will be vastly pleasant, though a somewhat startled feeling overtakes me at the thought of leaving Masevaux, *tout ce qui finit est si court*. For a fleeting, nostalgic moment I think, too, "What am I about, binding sheaves in this rich corner of the earth that is not mine?"

As we gather for lunch, some one reads the sweeping clauses of the conditions of the armistice with Austria-Hungary. Nothing is left save hunger and disorder. I wonder if those to whom one of the "first aims of the war is the dismemberment of the Dual Monarchy" see, in their passion, what it will mean to surround the centripetal force of Germany with floating, unsteady bits, that inevitably will be drawn to it. Some one hazarded the remark, evidently not so trite as we once thought it, that "if Austria didn't exist, she would have to be invented." Passion seems more than ever to be its own blind end, and, looking at those men, I thought, have we not fought and died the good death for other and further ends?

Then Laferrière began reading the American *communiqué*. We are but five miles from the Sedan-Metz



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line, one of the principal lines of communication of the Germans!

As in a dream I listen to the deeds of *my* soldiers, recited in the most beautiful of French, as many deeds of many men have been recited to many women through the ages.

*"Ce matin la Ière Armée a repris son attaque. En dépit d'une résistance désespérée nos troupes [américaines] ont forcé le passage de la Meuse à Briculles et à Cléry-le-Petit." . . .*

*"Beaumont, nœud de routes important, est tombé devant nos troupes victorieuses qui se sont avancées jusqu'au Bois de l'Hospice à deux milles au nord de Beaumont. Au cours de leur avance elles se sont emparées de Létanne. A Beaumont, nous avons délivré 500 citoyens français qui ont salué nos soldats comme leurs libérateurs. . . .*

*"L'avance des deux derniers jours a amené en certains points notre ligne à cinq milles de la voie ferrée Sedan-Metz, une des principales lignes de communication des armées allemandes." <sup>1</sup>*

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### <sup>1</sup> AMERICAN COMMUNIQUÉS

*Tuesday morning.*

This morning the First Army resumed the attack. In spite of desperate opposition our troops have forced a crossing of the Meuse at Briculles and at Cléry-le-Petit. They are now developing a new line in the heavily wooded and very difficult terrain on the heights east of the river between these two points.

On the entire front the enemy is opposing our advance with heavy artillery and machine-gun fire, notwithstanding which we are making excellent progress. The west bank of the Meuse, as far north as opposite Pouilly, lies in our hands.

In the course of several successful raids in the Voivre, detachments of the Second Army have penetrated the enemy's trenches, destroying material, dugouts, and emplacements, and capturing prisoners.

*Tuesday evening.*

The First Army under Lieut.-Gen. Liggett has continued its success. Crossing the river south of Dun-sur-Meuse under a heavy artillery fire which frequently wrecked the new constructed bridges, the troops of Maj.-Gen. Hines's Corps fought their way up the slopes of the east bank.

Breaking the enemy's strong resistance, they captured Hills 292, 260, Liny-devant-Dun, and drove him from the Bois de Châtillon.

During the afternoon our gains in this sector were extended northward; Dun-sur-Meuse was captured and our line pushed forward a mile beyond that town, as far as the village of Nièlly. The troops of

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As we sit down the commandant tells me they had been picking all sorts of strange things out of the air that morning, the ether stamped with unaccustomed names. He had just got a message, not meant for French ears, bearing a new signature, Ebert; the day before he had got one bearing that of Scheidemann. It is like a further dream of a dream, these things that are borne "upon the sightless couriers of the air."

At two o'clock I started out with Bernard and Laferrière, the latter on the errand of rounding up an actor in one of those obscure yet deadly village dramas.

"Generally I have little to do; they know they are well off," he said, and we agreed that it was indeed a pity to be pursued by original sin even unto these pleasant valleys.

We descend at Rammersmatt, a quite un sinful-looking place, and while he is gone Bernard and I visit the old church, beautifully held in the cleft of the hill, lying

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Maj.-Gen. Summerall's Corps reached the river at Cesse and Luzy and mopped up the forest of Jaulnay.

The important road center of Beaumont fell before our victorious forces, who pushed on to the Bois de l'Hospice, two miles north of that town, capturing in their advance the village of Létanne.

At Beaumont we liberated five hundred French citizens, who welcomed our soldiers as deliverers.

The advance of the past two days has carried our line to points within five miles of the Sedan-Metz railroad, the main line of communications of the German armies. Between Beaumont and Bar Maj.-Gen. Dickman's Corps, in close liaison with the French Fourth Army on its left, pushed forward under heavy artillery and machine-gun fire through the rugged forest areas beyond Stonne.

The villages of Yoncq, La Basace, and Stonne were taken.

We have taken to-day west of the Meuse 51 additional guns, making a total of more than 150 since November 1st.

Thirty of our bombing planes executed a successful raid on Mouzon and Raucourt this morning, dropping over two tons of bombs with good effect. Reconnaissance and pursuit squadrons carried out many successful missions, machine-gunning enemy troops and greatly assisting the advance of our troops.

Seventeen enemy planes were shot down and two enemy balloons burned. Seven of our planes are missing.

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against another hill, looking down on the plain of Cernay, toward the German lines. It is this same plain of Cernay, which I mentioned before, that was known in the old days as the “*Champ de Mensonges.*” There Ariovistus was defeated by Cæsar. There, too, Louis le Débonnaire was attacked by his three sons and betrayed by his army, and ever since it has been justly known as the “Field of Lies.” Centuries later the Swedes vanquished the imperial armies there under a Duke of Lorraine. To-day it is that thing known as “No Man’s Land,” brown with barbed-wire entanglements and rough with shell-holes—and other things besides.

Back of it are the zigzagging German lines. It is, too, the place of the century-old legend of the Niedecker’s young Thierry who, wandering there one night, saw strange sights. He had not drained a single glass of the *Rang de Thann*, nor of the red wine of Turckheim, called “*Sang des Turcs,*” but was dreaming, as an adolescent does, of everything and nothing, when suddenly the very stones of the valley began to move, and great fissures showed in the earth. From them issued thousands upon thousands of warriors of bygone times, striking against their shields and crying out in strange, hoarse voices, “*Hodeidah! Hodeidah!*”

Finally a man taller than all the others, Louis le Débonnaire, son of Charlemagne it was, his long, silvery hair surmounted by a gold and jeweled crown, jumped on a white horse and called by name, one after the other, the chiefs of his cohorts, who answered, “Here.”

Then the king, groaning with great groans, spoke beseechingly the names of the sons he had begotten, Lothaire, Louis, and Pépin.

But Lothaire, Louis, and Pépin mocked him and to further wound him caused to be brought on the battlefield his nephew, Bernard, he who had taken arms

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against him and whose eyes the king had caused to be put out (and for this the king knew little sleep).

Then as the battle begins the sightless Bernard jumps up behind the king's saddle, paralyzing his every movement. But at the very height of the combat, above its clash and shoutings, the third hour of morning sounds from a church tower, and suddenly the earth receives again the ancient host and all is as before. Only Thierry from the Niedeckers lay as if dead.

And the Field of Lies, *le Champ de Mensonges*, is said to be the spot where the children of earth will be assembled at the Day of Judgment, for what crime can equal that of the sons of Louis, who conquered, imprisoned, and caused to die of grief a father whose only fault was that he loved them too well? It is even said that it is the troops of Louis who will sound the brazen trumps to awaken the dead for their last accounting.

Now I see it as "No Man's Land," rusty and brown with patches of barbed wire, rough with great shell-holes, but they say that even in intervals of peace it is never so luxuriantly fertile as are the fields that lie about it. . . .

A white, very white afternoon heaven stretches above us. Very violent cannonading.

"*C'est nous—c'est le Boche*," Bernard repeats from time to time. Then his sharp eye distinguishes a group of German airplanes, and, looking where he points, I see five spots black, black in the white sky.

They, too, are immediately fired on. I hear over my head the great swish made by the shells from the guns placed on a hill behind us—or so sounding. My ear is not quick to distinguish directions in these echoing hills.

Little balls of snow-white shrapnel, like beautifully wound balls of fleecy wool, gently unloosen themselves about the black spots of the five airplanes, which, after a while, disappear to the east.

## “FIELD OF LIES” AND LAIMBACH

Though not so overcome as the Niedecker's Thierry, I feel that my eyes, too, have looked on a strange spectacle.

Then Laferrière rejoins us. By the pleased look on his face we guess that he hasn't made the wages of sin too high, and we continue on our way under the late, and still very white, afternoon sky. Suddenly the heavily plated, thickly enameled rust and gold and black of the hillsides seem to disappear and the earth is green again, young and tenderly green, like spring, but how and why? It lasted but a few minutes, for on the slopes toward Thann there was again the autumnal gleam of gold and rust, and spots of fathomless black.

Entering Laimbach, we stopped to get the mayor, who was to conduct us to the old Jesuit church, half-way between his village and the village of Otzwiller, or rather its site, for Otzwiller disappeared completely during the Thirty Years' War, wherein each lovely Alsatian valley had been sacked and burned and destroyed, and friends of yesterday were enemies of to-day, and *vice versa*.

The mayor was a voluble, amiable mayor, who had conserved, during those many German years, a vast amount of creaking, noisy, unpleasant French.

His village was ancient, high-roofed, many-fountained, and had been much shelled. The streets were full of children playing, blue soldiers were walking about, girls were leaning out of the windows to give and get a greeting, or being pinched as they giggled about the streets, clicking their sabots in the mud. As we passed out the white sky darkened suddenly and a hard red began to burn in the west. We found ourselves nearing a half-demolished fifteenth-century church, placed strangely between the battered, living village and the ghostly village of the Thirty Years' War. It was of *grès rose* and had been built on the foundations of an

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even earlier one, and near it was a shell-shot, ancient, high, red-roofed presbytery. For generations the church had been a shrine of St.-Blaise, and on every 3d of February the mayor told us (but sadly, as one speaking of a pleasant past) there had been a great pilgrimage made by those suffering from throat maladies.

Now over all was hanging a penetrating atmosphere of bootless desolation, and I was suddenly seized with an anxious feeling that I should be about the secret lonely business of my soul. Life seemed unbearably sad and short, and "where was the place of eternal happiness, the place where the Barbarian need be feared no more?" . . .<sup>1</sup>

In front of the church had been placed, somewhat indiscreetly, the officers thought, a big battery. And the mayor said, too, apologetically, "*Évitement z'édait mal joizi par écard à l'église,*" for the battery had soon been sighted. After the church had received many shells right in her pink and lovely bosom, it had been moved some forty meters away, but even so it had again been *repérée*, and the church had suffered the usual fate of churches near batteries. Some fine old columns were left in the apse, of the delicious *grès rose*. For a moment Laferrière and I stood scaling off bits of the disfiguring gray plaster and wondering why it had ever been put on, it and all the other gray stucco that a certain austere century had plastered over gorgeous building-stone everywhere in Europe.

The church, like the village of the Thirty Years' War, will soon be but a name, for its walls are cracked and sagging, and with another winter's frost they will crumble and fall. Through the roofless nave we walked over a

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<sup>1</sup> And now let all those come who love Paradise, the place of quiet, the place of safety, the place of eternal happiness, the place where the Barbarian may be feared no more.—ST. AUGUSTINE, *Upon the Barbarian Persecution*.

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mass of torn-up old mosaic flooring, and heaps of gaudy modern stained glass fallen from the lovely, ancient, pointed windows.

It was getting dark as we passed out into the disorderly cemetery, between the church and the battery (and even for a cemetery very uninviting, torn up as it was by recent shells). Ends of coffins were sticking out, shabby, twisted, bead wreaths and muddy, discolored tricolor badges lay about, while in the middle of a once tidy family plot, by name Hilz, was a huge new shell-hole of only the day before.

The mayor gave a shudder as he looked at his own familiar graveyard, where his parents and his friends had been laid—though not to rest. He was out for the first time after grippe and he said, with a determined look and in his most creaking French, “If I have to die, all right, but I’ve forbidden my daughter to bury me here.” Many, many had also fallen in the fields, and everywhere thin earth lay over damp, shallow graves marked by shabby, crooked crosses. Meadow mists were beginning to rise and the copper-colored edge had hardened in the sky. I felt again an inexpressible discouragement. I tried to think of Peace, so near, so hotly desired, so redly pursued, but I could only perceive the damp meadow, the demolished church, the gun-emplacements, the disorderly, shelled cemetery, and the humid odor of death and mold and rotting leaves. As yet nothing seemed to have risen incorruptible.

We turned and went again along the dark, damp valley road till we reached the village with its consoling hum of life. Through the dusky street washed the lovely soft blue of soldiers; a group stood with some girls around the beautiful fountain, deeply pink in the half-light, built in the fifteenth century by the Jesuits, though the mayor insisted on placing the Sons of Loyola

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in the fourteenth. In fact, the Jesuits and the fourteenth century were one in his mind. Then, as far as he was concerned, came the war of 1914. He wanted us to come into his house to partake of some brand of white liqueur—as I have said the people of these valleys distil all and every bright-colored fruit of their earth. It would seem that the whole flora of Alsace can be used to this end, and no matter which of God's colors go into their alembics, passing through, it comes out pure white, to befuddle the heads and harden the stomachs of the populace—and little boys are born with the burden of deafness. Though twilight enveloped us, I knew the look that must be on the mayor's face, and something a bit phosphorescent came into his eyes as he spoke of a *petite mirabelle*. Fortunately, it was too late to accept.

A few minutes later we found ourselves on the screened road to Masevaux, moving slowly, without lights, the road overlooking the Field of Lies, where the Germans watched.

Above the hills in front of us was a very thin, very long, very red, crescent moon. No one spoke.

Doubtless the officers, like myself, were wondering upon what, when it was full and white, its light would shine. Now it was turned to blood.

The roads were crowded with rattling artillery wagons, transporting guns and supplies under cover of the deep, blue night. Once or twice on some hillside, turned away from the German valley, was the leaping of a flame, from the fire of a group of *artilleurs*, who were to wait the morning on wooded slopes.

Thoughts of the ghostly village of Otzwiller, now but a name, pursued me, and of the Swedish invasion. And the miseries of the Thirty Years' War seemed to confound themselves with these of the war I know so well, while the night deepened, under the long, thin,



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red moon, hanging behind black-palled hills, in a heaven that still had an edge of copper.

A church bell sounded and something flying swiftly touched me at that hour of the evening sacrifice, and I knew then that those who tread the olives are rarely anointed with the oil, and I cried out within myself suddenly and in despair, a long-unremembered line of the great Italian:

*“Faro come colui che piange.”*

## X

## THE VALLEY OF THE THUR

NOVEMBER 7th, St.-Amarin.—This morning farewell, perhaps a long farewell, to Masevaux, and I now dwell in the broad, sweet valley of the Thur. I had felt many pains of parting while putting my things into the Japanese straw basket and the little leather valise. This was quite a simple act, for I flatter myself that those receptacles contain only essentials, though I had long since begun to wish that I had brought another dress for evening, feeling a bit dull always buttoned up in my uniform, and only a white shirt changed from a blue one to mark the difference between morning and evening. One of those 1918 dresses, that can be carried in the pocket without making it bulge, would not have added perceptibly to the weight of my accoutrement, and would have brightened up the *popotes*. The light from the Oberforster's chandelier at Masevaux was as pitiless as that which beats about thrones—and presidential chairs (which much resemble them)—and ladies *en mission* should come prepared.

Before leaving I went to say good-by to Mère Labonne, who showed me the good things in preparation for luncheon and begged me to stay—scrambled eggs with truffles, two *poulets* ready for roasting, a tart *au mocha* that she was frosting on a marble table. But the look of one who goes was in my eyes, and she ceased to insist.

Return to the Place du Chapitre; many officers and

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motors under the yellowing trees in front of the *Kommandantur*, a general arriving, some sort of delegation departing. I say a thousand thanks to the amiable, cultivated, agreeable Demoiselles Braun, three of whom wear decorations for their war-work in hospitals, for contagious diseases, and one, Stéphanie, "*qui n'a pas dit son dernier mot*," is charming after the way of the perceptive, witty women of the seventeenth or eighteenth century. Then I find myself getting into the motor of the commandant, who, in the meantime, has greeted and sped the general on his way. His face has something shining about it as he gives the great news, written on the no longer insubstantial air, of the German demand for an armistice. Then he reads the *communiqué* from the Belfort newspaper as we drive out of Masevaux, telling us more about the Germans in full retreat, and the Americans close behind them at *Sedan!* What a rustling of the pages of history! The mind leaps to new things, life normal again, and all forces bent to reconstruction.

As we pass over the screened road to Thann, where we are to lunch with the military mayor, Captain Saint-Girons, the net of broom and pine camouflage, screening the valley where the Germans are, suddenly seemed some monument of ancient history; and, unlike the noisy hours of yesterday, there was no sound of cannon.

Arrived at Thann, it is we who give the great, the unbelievable, the unrealizable news of the demand for an armistice to Captain Saint-Girons, who, with several uniformed schoolmasters, is waiting in front of the Mairie to receive us. And our "feet are beautiful as the feet of them that bring the Gospel of Peace and glad tidings of good things."

I think for a moment how strange for *me* to carry it to them, to these men, who have fought for it, who have waited for it, watched for it, bled for it—but everything is strange in this strangest of all strange worlds.

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Going into the house, we find other schoolmasters, with some bright-eyed little boys ranging in years from seven to twelve.

Then to lunch. I sit on the commandant's right, Captain Gasquet, *adjoint* of the mayor, on my other side, the mayor himself opposite, the schoolmasters placed prudently and watchfully near that selected flock, who enliven the ends of the table. Now these little Alsatian hopefuls are very bright of eye, rosy of cheek, and on their good behavior, which, in spite of lurking potentialities, persisted during the lunch, even when a glow, doubtless not unaccustomed, tinged their cheeks, as they drank the wine of their own hillsides.

At dessert I asked Commandant Poulet to drink to Sedan, the *new* Sedan. I thought within myself, "Is it not even now as a temple being cleansed and glorified in the chalice of the blood of *my* people, the blood of the khaki-clad youths from over the seas, whom Fate, since all time, had decreed to unseal it?" Tears came to my eyes, there was a deep beat in my breast.

And it had been forty-eight years and two months and seven days since it was torn from a vanquished France.

I scarcely remember what was said of the day's events; feeling, rather than thought, was flooding about the table, and it was in gratitude, in wonderment, and rather silently, for a group of Frenchmen, that the luncheon proceeded. Each was thinking perhaps of his part of loss and grief making up the victory.

Names of Americans who had visited Thann were spoken: Dr. Herbert Adams Gibbons, long the friend of Alsace, and in some wise, as I told them, the god of the machine directing my steps to them; Mr. John Weare; and others whom I don't recall. There had been, too, a fair and fleeting vision of Mrs. Bliss one snowy winter day.

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Many beautiful words were said of my country, and in that hour I think it was, to them of the reconquered triangle, "*dulce et decora*" to have even the least of the daughters of the Stars and Stripes at their board, that hers should have been among the feet bringing "the glad tidings of good things."

When coffee and *quetsch* and cigarettes were passed around, the schoolmasters made ready to pour some of the heady white liqueur into the glasses of even the smallest of the little boys, but the commandant said, "No," and cigarettes only are offered to the babes. I would put my hand in the fire (knowing I could draw it out unsinged) that it was not the first time they had puffed "caporals." The seven-year-old one held his with an astounding ease, not entirely hereditary. When he had finished he was stood on a chair, from which he recited "*Le Loup et l'Agneau*," the lines concerning the now extremely well-demonstrated "*La raison du plus fort est toujours la meilleure*," being given almost at a breath, one word tightly tied to another in quite an ingenious way.

An older one, whose naturally flashing eye was slightly restrained only by the solemnity of the occasion, gave us the equally classic, "*Maidre corpeau sur un arbre bergé*." He hadn't been caught so young, and the old Adam in the shape of his German accent was heavy upon him. Then, standing in a row, they sang "*Le Chant du Départ*," that greatest of all the wars' marching songs, and the childish voices cut my heart like a knife, and tears were loosened, and through their blur I seemed to see the march of the generations of Alsace adown the ages, fulfilling the shifting, cruel destinies of border peoples. Ghosts of the Thirty Years' War, of the Napoleonic wars, of 1870, and of 1914, and of the other dateless struggles that have ravaged their rich valleys, come before me. I

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weep and weep, and my handkerchief is a microscopic, damp, gray ball. I have an idea that pride of sex alone restrained the blue-clad men from tears. Peace, lovely Peace, desired like the morning, was arising, but her light was to shine on rivers of blood, running through such black ruins that her glory and her sweetness, and even her hope, hurt with a great hurt, and I thought again on those who, empty-armed, must yet rejoice. . . .

Afterward I strolled along the banks of the pebbly Thur with the commandant and Captain Saint-Girons. There is a river-path leading under balconied, red-roofed houses, or by gray walls, and there is an old round tower having a caplike roof with a point on the top, and against it are silhouetted a poplar and a sycamore. Nearly everywhere the lovely gray lace spire of the cathedral shows above roof or tree or chimney; and it is said that though Strasbourg's cathedral is higher and Friburg's is wider, Thann's is the loveliest.<sup>1</sup>

When the Mission had its headquarters at Thann, the commandant and Captain Saint-Girons were wont to walk along this path in the afternoon, holding a sort of tribunal, receiving petitions, granting favors, righting differences that may occur even among the delivered, quite after the fashion of Saint-Louis receiving the petitions of his people under the great tree.

The river flows through the heart of the lovely old town, badly bombarded in spots. To our left as we walked rose the deep-colored hills in the full afternoon burnishing of their deep rusty reds and pale gilts. As we pass up the steep winding road we meet the Duc de Trévisé, under-lieutenant, with a sketch in his hand of a shell-shot historic corner of Thann, the commandant wishing to save at least a memorial wherever he can. Furthermore, Thann was black-spotted with our negro

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<sup>1</sup>"S'Strassburger Münster isch s'höschet, s'Friburgers' dickscht, aver S'Thanner s'fienecht."



THANN. LA VIEILLE TOUR





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troops. Sometimes I stopped and spoke, sometimes I waved as I passed, just to see the full, white-toothed smile against the exotic background.

The orphanage toward which we are bound is in the old Château de Marsilly, beautifully situated in the cleft of its own hill and restored not too cruelly. Close above it rises the Engelberg, the tower of whose castle was blown up when Turenne practised the arts of war in the valley. Part of it lies like a great ring, and is called the "Eye of the Witch." To our right as we mount is a V-shaped glimpse of the valley where the Germans lie intrenched, formed by close, rich hillsides, on which lie in lovely, ruglike designs the vineyards of *l'heureuse Alsace féconde en vignobles*.

A charming, vivacious nun whose age was unguessable by twenty years, dark-eyed and satin-skinned, whose manners could not have been surpassed for ease by any woman of the great world, greets us. I think for the thousandth time how perfect the polish the conventual life gives. I have seen in peasant cottages the rooms wherein they were born, these women of restrained gesture, of dignified mien, of easy charm in conversation, of finished courtesy, and realize again that something invisible, imponderable, yet all-powerful, shapes the coarse block, polishes the rough surface, till there is no resemblance to that out of which it was hewn.

As we turn to go down we stand for a moment looking again through the V-shaped cleft at the rich, blue plain held by the enemy.

"How often," said Captain Saint-Girons, after a silence, "it has seemed to me like the Promised Land, and how often during these four interminable years have I longed to look at these hills *from* the plain."

"Now all is fulfilling itself," I answered.

The commandant said nothing, but his gaze, too, was fixed on the wide horizon.

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Then we visited the military cemetery, a pleasant place, as cemeteries go, with many trees, and fallen, rustling leaves, and a few late-blooming flowers. Many sons of France were lying there since "the beginning"; others had been but lately laid away. The two officers stood for a moment with uncovered heads by the graves of four comrades of the Mission, killed by a bomb in front of the Mairie, as they were going in for lunch. Again I bowed my head and tears were loosened. Never as in this war has "death been made so proud with pure and princely beauty." How can we so soon be engaged in "business as usual," compete with the splendor of these dead?

Then we pass down the valley of the Thur, so greatly loved by those who dwell therein, inclosed by purple and dark-amber hills, but inclosed easily, widely, leaving room for fancy, for delight, with no sense of being shut in by heaps of earth that press too tight.

As we enter St.-Amarin, the long, central street is like a pale-blue ribbon, for through it a battalion of some Marseilles regiment is passing. As my eye received it I knew the lovely picture for some bleaching daguerreotype, its color and lineaments to fade in the bright light of peace. We stop a moment at the Administration building and see again M. de Maroussem, to whom, on meeting him first at Madame Galland's, I had said, "You are an Englishman?" And to those who have frequented international worlds I don't need to say how he looks. To others I would say that he is tall, blond, athletic, wearing easily a well-cut, not too new uniform, and having a perceptive blue eye (which, however, is really a very French eye when one takes a second look). One would have known that he hunted in England and had polo-ponies in France. In civil life he is a banker.

Now among other things he is chef of the St.-Amarin

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*popote* and tells me dinner is at 7.45 "tapant." The hour is near wherein I am to be shown how far superior the St.-Amarin *popote* is to that of Masevaux.

Then the commandant accompanies me to the house of M. Helmer, the well-known Alsatian lawyer who is counsel for the Mission. Also it was he who defended Hansi when he was brought before the German courts and condemned for *lèse-majesté*.<sup>1</sup>

From the great bowed window of Madame Helmer's drawing-room I could look down the suddenly mystical-seeming valley, discerned by the spirit rather than the eye at 4.30 of a November afternoon. It was but a stretch of white filmy substance between violet hills, under a gray-green heaven, with something warm and precious at its western edge. Such a passing of the day as the saints of old would have loved.

Hung along the wall opposite the great window are engravings of the Mantegna frieze from Hampton Court, and there were many books.

After tea the commandant took his leave and Madame Helmer showed me to my comfortable room where I had thirty saving minutes, horizontal and in the dark, fully conscious, but completely resting, thought consecutive but not active, flowing in a smooth way between banks of quiet nerves in quiet flesh.

"Seven forty-five tapant" finds me again at the

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<sup>1</sup> Some of the jokes that were Hansi's undoing were exceedingly harmless, as, for instance, the domestic revelations of Frau Professor Kugelberg, who answers to the correspondence column the following: "No, I never throw away the old trousers of my husband. I have had great success with cutting them skilfully and employing the least worn parts, in constructing for my young daughters charming and dainty corset-covers, which have the merit also of being very inexpensive. Trimmed with white ribbons, these corset-covers have quite a virginal air, but also with apple-green and cherry-red bows they can be made most attractive." As for "Professor Knatschke" he is now a classic. The Alsations have, in a very marked degree, what one might call the wit of border peoples, the tongue often being the only weapon left them.

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Administration building, whither M. Helmer accompanied me, and it is very pleasant as I enter. Commandant Poulet is sitting at a huge desk signing papers, more blue-clad officers and two *infirmières* are presented, after which we pass into the dining-room, whose doors are flung open in classic style by a well-trained orderly. In Masevaux we simply gathered and sat down. Now the mess-table of St.-Amarin has a decided touch of elegance, too, in the way of pink-shaded candles, and in the middle there was an arrangement of chrysanthemums and autumn leaves. Instead of a *Mère Labonne* they have a *cordons bleu* who performs his rites very suitably in the dark-blue uniform of the chasseurs. We sit down to a dinner that might have been served with pride at Voisin's or the Café de Paris, where all except the chairs is extra and getting back a cane or hat costs the remaining eye (if one remains) of the head. I am indeed impressed, as I was meant to be, and M. de Maroussem might have said, "Didn't I tell you so?" in his pure and pleasant English. I sat between the commandant and Captain Perdrizet, chief of the Forestry Service of the Thann district, and to the sound of cannon, which in spite of peace prospects was heavily firing over the Hartmannswillerkopf, we consumed *carpes à la Flamande*, a course of game elaborately presented with all its feathers, finishing with *poires Bordaloue*, the whole perpetuated on a charming menu card decorated with the classic Alsatian stork by Andrieux, one of the officers of the mess.

As I sat down I saw in front of me a sign over the door leading into the pantry, a somewhat Y. M. C. A.-ish sign, "*Sois sobre et tu vivras longtemps*" ("Be sober and you will live long"), and de Maroussem's feelings were almost hurt when I asked if perhaps behind me there was one that said, "*Mange peu et tu seras invité souvent*" ("Eat little and you will be invited often"). And when

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it came time for coffee and cigarettes and some especially old *quetsch* he brought out the book, "The Friends of France," that I had first seen at Harry Sleeper's in Gloucester Bay, a thousand years ago, it seemed, and we turned to the death and citation of Norman Hall, Commandant Poulet recalling again that he had begun his work in Alsace on the 25th of December, 1914, and on the 26th he had stood by Norman Hall's open grave.

Then a radio, just received, concerning the Parliementaries, is discussed; among them is slated von Hintze, leading to talk of the days when I had known him in Mexico. Count Oberndorf, too, husband of a dear and charming friend of Dutch and American birth, was on the list, and we spoke of Vienna as it had been—and was no more. *Sic transit* . . . though I thought within myself, as I looked, for a flashing moment, down the vista of history, many things return.

It was late when two officers accompanied me to my dwelling, to the sucking sound of boots in mud, and under a starless sky hanging dark and heavy over a black, black earth. At last I could draw literally the drapery of my couch about me and lie down to dreams of *my* men in blood and glory before Sedan.

## XI

### THE RE-GALLICIZING OF ALSACE

**N**OVEMBER 8th, *St.-Amarin, Night.*—Fancy and feeling too quickened for sleep. If there is anything I did not see or anything I did not feel, in and about *St.-Amarin*, I challenge some one of the Mission to produce it.

This was my day, or rather half of it. At 8.45 Lieutenant Fress, Inspector of Schools, came to fetch me, and not knowing how to be late (alack!), I am on the stairs as he rings the bell. We pass out into a white, rather flat November world toward the schoolhouses, everywhere the clean odor of freshly hewn wood and sawdust hangnig on the November air.

Now the re-Gallicizing of Alsace is one of the most interesting political operations I have ever seen, and Heaven knows I've seen many in many lands. But this washing out and marking in of history on the clean slate of childhood is different from anything else, though easier than most things, the eye of youth glancing easily from earth to heaven and from heaven to earth--and soft and eager the slate of its mind.

The *St.-Amarin* schoolhouse is a large, solid building, its walls hung everywhere with huge war-posters, all of those one sees in Paris and many besides.

The classes for the smaller children, in accordance with the traditions of the valley, here also are in the hands of the Sisters of "The Divine Providence," who, in the earliest years of the nineteenth century, opened in

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St.-Amarin the first school for girls. The other classes are taught by carefully selected Alsatian teachers or by mobilized French schoolmasters. Formerly French was the language of honor, for the well-to-do only, but now this article, once "of luxury," is for all the language of their country and their heart, and pride mixes with the zeal with which the peasants pursue *la belle langue*—not always successfully. For in these border regions the tongue has an un-Gallic thickness; the voice is placed far back in the throat, with a strong accent on the tonic, nothing of the light flinging from the lips that makes the beauty of the French language and its conquest so difficult.

We begin with a class of small children, where a smiling, almost exuberantly happy nun is teaching a group of little delivered darlings to sing, "*Il y avait une bergère et ron, ron, ron, petit pat à pon*"—to my surprise, in the latest manner of Jacques Dalcroze. They evidently mean to keep abreast of the times here in Alsace.

While they recited I looked about. The room was large, light, and superheated by a small, black, iron stove fiercely burning. On the wall were maps of the Old World, and, I had almost said, of the world to come, for new divisions of countries were indicated. Among the many posters and in the place of honor was a big colored text, which I afterward saw in every room, with the head-line, "*Pourquoi on ne peut pas conclure une paix fondée sur la parole de l'Allemagne*" ("Why one cannot make a peace founded on the word of Germany").

The children were literally as good as gold. No scuffling of feet nor restless rubbing about on the seats. I remarked this as we left the room after listening to "*Le Loup et l'Agneau*" recited in those shrill, thin voices, and Lieutenant Fress said, with a smile:

"What remains of the Boche discipline makes them

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docile and attentive scholars; they are often several hours in class without needing to be reprimanded for chattering or lack of attention."

Later I delicately inquired about ink-throwing or "spitballs," but it appeared they're unknown.

We then betook ourselves upstairs to a class of older girls, from ten to thirteen or thereabouts, to whom Lieutenant Fress, with the greatest confidence, put the most difficult questions. It was a class of French history, and he began boldly with the Druids and finished with the war of 1914. He has a gift for teaching, and was so easy with those children, whom I should have been embarrassed, not to say terrified, to approach, that the answers came pleasantly and quickly. When at a certain moment, however, there was a delay, I got anxious, thinking to myself, suppose the Sister or Lieutenant Fress were to say to the class:

"You don't know? Then we must ask this *aimable* lady who has come across the ocean to visit you. *She* will tell us." And of Charles the Fat, then engaging our attention, I only remembered vaguely that he had had a saintly wife of whom he grew tired. There were other questions, too, about Louis of Aquitaine, which awakened only the faintest echoes in memory, but which to my relief were answered to complete satisfaction by a determined, dark-eyed, round-faced girl of twelve or thereabouts.

Lieutenant Fress then asked who could recite "*La Laitière et le Pot au Lait*." All hands shot up, and the recitation proceeded with much *brio*.

"What does this teach us?" he boldly asked at the end.

At this a heavy-jawed, but very bright, near-together-eyed girl raised her hand without a second's hesitation, and equally without a second's hesitation answered:

"To think only of the present." As is elegantly expressed in the enemies' tongue, that girl wasn't one of



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whom it would be said she would be "left hanging," except of course as regards the imponderabilities.

Lieutenant Fress: "But is it well to think only of the present? What of imagination, and things that may happen in the future?"

A small, undersized girl with a deep-blue eye somewhat nervously answered:

"In imagination one builds castles in Spain."

This was encouraging, but what she called *châteaux d'Espagne* seemed not, however, to find great favor, for a silence fell on that bright-eyed class.

"But isn't that all right?" continued Lieutenant Fress, giving a fillip. "Must we think only of the things we can see and touch?"

At the mention of seeing and touching, hands again shot up. He indicated a thick-haired, heavy-browed girl.

"In thinking of the things she doesn't see, the good housewife would forget to cook the dinner, *et cela serait tommage*," was the answer coming from the deepest depths of her consciousness.

On which we leave the schoolroom, with its extremely practical atmosphere, the argument being unanswerable, even by Lieutenant Fress. I could but think on that long line of peasants who have wrestled with realities, begotten, brought forth, tilled the soil, baked the bread, struggling all the time with their border-destiny, nature and history, even more than their own wills, having made them what they are. It struck me as reasonable that they should be a canny set, those little girls. Something alert, perceptive of realities, was forming them, they could not be over-given to dreams, for which one is both sorry and glad, according to the way one happens to feel about human things at the moment—and not necessarily the way they are. Even Marcus Aurelius tells us that "if a thing displease us" (I suppose he

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only forgot to add, "or if a thing please us") "it is not that thing, but our view of that thing." And certainly a lot of perfectly good things are spoiled by the point of view.

In the next room they were having a lesson in American history, quite in the note everywhere these days, and I know the Sister saw the hand of God as I entered at that special moment (she was a quiet-eyed, not very young Sister, who had trod further paths than those of learning). Then and there I heard the tale of the Boston Tea-party, and its consequences, of the War of the Rebellion, and the name of Lincoln, pronounced "Lancone," who "wanted all men to be free and equal," sounded through the room. No one, of course, expressed a doubt, nor ever will in schoolrooms, that men aren't free, neither are they equal. As for myself, I thank God nearly every morning that some men always will be better than others, realizing that there is more difference between man and man than between man and beast, which truth was recalled to me but shortly by an equalitarian friend of the New Republic—but it's not for schools, like many other truths. Even Saint Paul can do nothing except cry out, "Shall not the potter have power to shape the vessel as he will, some to honor, some to dishonor?" which again recognizes the fact of inequality without explaining it. However, there's no use going into that now.

I soon found myself in a class of boys of twelve to fifteen years of age. They were having a lesson in German, and were reading a "piece" called "*Der arme Sepp*," the history of whose misfortunes (he was a stable-boy, and the horse ran away and the wagon was broken, and he was received by his master with blows) didn't seem to stick; for after it had been read out no boy, in answer to Lieutenant Fress's questions, could recount the short and simple annals of poor Sepp.

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They weren't nearly so bright as the girls. Dull-eyed, pimply-faced, squeaky-voiced, they were wrestling with something that was for the time stronger than books—the eternal *Frühlings Erwachen*, that has always occupied philosophers and scientists—though not so much parents, who are apt to avoid the issues involved.

We passed finally into a class where young women were dissecting *Les Obsèques de la Lionne*, under the guidance of a brown-bearded, one-armed teacher in uniform. It was a small room, and you could have cut the air with a knife. And for the mist I could scarcely see the placard "*Pourquoi on ne peut pas conclure une paix fondée sur la parole d'Allemagne*" and the portraits of Clémenceau and Poincaré.

About this time I began to understand that La Fontaine is the pillar of the French educational system; and there is no doubt that he *did* clear up a lot of doubtful things, in the most liquid use of the clearest of all languages.

We listened here to dissertations on the falseness of courts and courtiers, the charms of which were not touched on. How those who frequented them learned disastrous habits of dissimulation, not to say lying, and how 'twas better to live in obscurity (which for some reason is always supposed to be cheerful and where nobody ever lies perhaps because it isn't worth while). Courts are not in favor anywhere just now, but everybody will admit they've had a glorious past; and as for democracy's future, which the Bolsheviki and the New Freedom are decidedly handicapping, they *may* run it a close second. This class was not so interesting, however, as were the children's—discussions of intellectual propositions by people who aren't intellectual being an awful bore at any time.

Toward the end there was a horrid moment, Lieutenant Fress bearing up with equanimity, when the

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over-bold teacher, interrupting the reading, asked the meaning of the word "*apothéose*." Dead silence.

"*Continuez*," he finally said, though a young woman with an immense amount of corn-colored hair waved low about some spectacled blue eyes, and wearing a large silver pin with the word "*Adieu*" on it, showed signs of being about to bring forth the answer.

They finished the fable in unison in their strong border-accent, which seemed to get thicker and thicker as we got farther up the flights of learning.

*Amusez les rois par les songes,  
Flattez-les, payez les d'agréables mensonges.  
Quelque intignation dont leur cœur soit rempli,  
Ils goberont l'abbât, vous serez leur ami.*

But methought it isn't anything like what the "people" will have to "swallow," when everybody is free and nobody is equal. And I wondered again at those who think to change the destinies of nations from without, by formulas or commands, when each evolves mysteriously, mystically, inevitably from within, out of its own particular shape and substance and strength. Even one from over the seas, clad in the supremest power a great nation has ever lent a mortal, though he pull the earth to pieces in the attempt, cannot change this law of nature. "*Que direz-vous, races futures?*"

And time respects nothing that is done without it.

As we came out into the square, little boys were bringing in armfuls of wood for their schoolroom stoves, others were already noisily scampering home for dinner in the crisp, sawdusty air; straight columns of smoke from many chimneys evoked women standing about noonday fires; there was a homely, human feeling about it all. . . .

As I went through the school it seemed to me that the types of the children were modified in two ways, inclin-

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ing now toward the elongated head, with pointed chin, dark hair, dark eyes, and mantling color, now toward the round-headed, square-jawed, blond type, with full, dreamy, blue eyes. But under these modifications one felt that there was a persistent something that was their own, neither German nor French nor anything else, for all the mingling; the Alsatian root and stem, with an inalienable, peculiar life mounting in it, its very own, its race-gift.

And this essential gift, this rich, diverse inheritance, had been received from each point of the compass. From the south, through the defiles of the Alps, the great Latin traditions had infiltrated. From the north and east had come Germanic thought, with its mystical reactions, its metaphysical inclinations, its marvelous legends, and its romantic chronicles of gods and half-gods. From the west, from Gaul, came grace and courtesy and the deathless wish for liberty. Was ever a people more richly endowed? Yet, how shall even such a seed grow if it never lie quiet in the warm darkness of the earth? . . .

Then I turned from the paths of learning, and went over to the very well-kept ambulance, in charge, since several years, of the ladies from Mulhouse, whom I had met at dinner the night before.

And I stood by the bed of a dying negro of the Fifteenth New York Infantry, his eyes already glazed, and thought how he was to leave the broad valley of the Thur for that other wider Valley of the Soul, where, it is said, we are all of one color. And I am inclined to believe it, for the further I go, even in this life, the less real difference I find in people; even the white, unfortunately, are extraordinarily alike about most things; and one can but wonder why the few high differences, rather than the low and easy likenesses, are discouraged by so many good men.

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Then I sought out the church of pink stone, passing a pink fountain in the chestnut-planted square it fronts on, where blue-clad soldiers were coming and going, busy about their midday meal. And, entering the church, I thought, after commending the soul of the negro to its Maker, of St.-Amarin, who has given his name to the broad, sweet valley and its pleasant town.

The chronicles have it that he erected an oratory hereabouts with his own hands. Later when St.-Prix, the holy bishop of Auvergne, was passing by, on his way to the court of Childeric to obtain permission to build a church, he stopped at the oratory to rest and found its builder lying ill of a fever. St.-Prix making the sign of the cross upon his breast, immediately the fever falls, and Amarin finds himself bathed in a gentle sweat. He arises, gives thanks to God, and in gratitude offers to accompany St.-Prix to the king's court.

Now, some time before, St.-Prix had run afoul of a vicious, thick-souled man named Hector, Count of Marseille. The matter being brought to court, in the final judgment the holy bishop had been acquitted, and the wicked Hector convicted and put to death.

But the family of Hector was proud and vengeful and powerful (in our days we've seen such), and learning that St.-Prix had set out on the journey, sent a squad of archers and other soldiery to make away with him *en route*.

These came upon him, accompanied by St.-Amarin, in a village known as Volvic. Now when Amarin saw the assassins stretching their bows, the first thought of the natural man was to get out of harm's way. But St.-Prix, further advanced in sanctity and therefore more perceptive of the invisibilities, seizing him by the arm, said to him the words, alas! so incomprehensible to us, children of the age: "If you lose this opportunity for martyrdom, you will perhaps never find it again!"

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At this Amarin stood his ground, though one has a feeling from the little one knows of him that he had a natural love for life. He was the first to be massacred, "his soul leaving his body in the company of angels."

The assassins, thinking their work well done, were about to depart, when St.-Prix called to them, saying: "But I am he whom you seek. Do with me what you will." Whereupon one of the evil men, Radebert by name, gave him a sword-thrust through the breast. And as he cried out the words each one of us should ever have ready on his tongue (Heaven knows they are needed often enough), "Forgive them, Lord, they know not what they do," another thrust caused his brains to spurt from his head. Whereupon angels were seen again descending, and the murderers, appalled by a great light that filled the valley, took their flight.

Sitting quietly in the pink church of St.-Amarin (its interior is noble of breadth and length, though not high), I thought how sweet is the mystical gift, and that one but stingily endowed in other ways, without houses or lands, or even learning or beauty or grace, if he have but the inner light, draws many unto him.

So alluring are such that kings in anguish call for them; even the wasters of life, they know not why, sometimes seek them out; others have been known to forget their money-making, or stop their spending, and render themselves physically uncomfortable, trying to get at the strange and secret gift they offer.

For the permanent interest of life is the unseen, and neither visible joys nor visible griefs can compete with it, nor any of the ways of the flesh, however pleasant or however straight.

And who would not sometimes dwell on these inner stages of the life-journey? With joy on the first period, which is that of innocence, passing with a sigh to the second, which is that of deviation; with a moistening of

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the dry heart to the third, that of reconciliation. Finally in humility to the fourth and last, which is that of pilgrimage, where the soul, accepting the two great natural abhorrences, old age and dissolution, hopeth for redemption and renewal. . . .

And then I found the clock was striking twelve and I left the inner world (alas! rarely is my stay in it long, even if no clock strikes) and hurried to the *popote*.



## XII

### THE HARTMANNSWILLERKOPF

*"Now thou art come upon a feast of death"*

VERY pleasant luncheon, after the accounting of the flesh, though not dallied over, as Captain Perdrizet, a man (Heaven reward him; I never can) of much *élan* and quite a little perception of values, suggested changing my afternoon program, which was that of calling on various members of the high and comfortable bourgeoisie, whose "fleeting mansions" are known to me in many lands. When I found that, instead of basking in the comforts of this same bourgeoisie, eating their sweet and pleasant cakes, sitting in their deep arm-chairs, looking at the portraits of their ancestors, fingering their bric-à-brac and looking out at their view, I might, if the special commander of the special sector so willed it, make a pilgrimage to the sacramental Hartmannswillerkopf, where fifty thousand sleep—and where others even then as we spoke were laying themselves down, my heart was greatly quickened and my soul, after its manner, began to burn.

The sun was coming out between heavy showers as Captain Perdrizet and I departed hastily for Wesserling, where the permission was to be got. Now Wesserling rather deserves a page of its own, for many reasons, though, having a single thought—that of the pilgrimage—I gave but a glance at the very interesting little war-museum, stamped hastily on memory the quite delicious

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emplacement of the old château, now divided into various large and comfortable dwellings of the people on whom I was to call, and commanding the lovely valley to the west. Captain Perdrizet, who proved at every step to be a man of sequence as well as enthusiasm, took me straight to Commandant de Saint-Denis. After some conversation, which I politely didn't catch, but which terminated by: "*Oui, si c'est comme ça*" (I looked perhaps more reasonable than I felt with that heat about my heart), "but I must telephone to the commandant of the sector at Camp Wagram, and from there you must proceed with an armed escort." Gratefully, but with exceeding celerity, we shook the dust of the *Kommandantur* from our feet, and returned through the valley as far as Willer, when we began to rise in a world of mist and breaking light, from time to time deluged by a diamond-like shower. Up, up through hills that one can no longer call changeless, for they are hills with their heads nicked off, neither branch nor leaf left on the stumps that outline their notched and shabby crests. Past batteries and gun-emplacements, embedded in wet foliage, many of them made by American troops last summer. Deep through a world of rusty beeches, with pine forests splashed like ink on near hills, here and there the torch of a larch—*mélèze*, it is called—and it is the only one of its family that grows yellow in autumn and sheds its foliage, and doubtless kind heaven made it so, that it might be a lamp in dark forests. There was the sound of rushing waters; and everywhere that beauty of moving, blue, helmeted figures afoot, on horseback, or on muleback was woven into highway and forest path, and to mind came immortal verses, of which I changed two words:

Know'st thou the mountain-bridge that hangs on cloud?  
*Blue men* in mist grope o'er the torrent loud.  
In caves lie coiled the dragon's ancient brood.



AMERICAN TROOPS AT MASEVAUX CELEBRATING THE FOURTH OF JULY



[See page 26

FRENCH TROOPS AT MASEVAUX CELEBRATING THE FALL OF THE  
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For do not everywhere "in caves" great guns "lie coiled" whose "ancient brood" are these munition-heaps spawned upon the mountain-side?

Up, still up, past a long convoy of munitions and food mounting slowly and heavily to the sacrificial Hartmannswillerkopf, which seems like a great altar under whose stone lie many saints—and the number of its cemeteries is one hundred and thirteen, while God alone knows the unnamed, unnumbered graves, and those yet to be dug. I find that rarely do the bones of soldiers travel far, and so it should be, for what spot, even of a father's inheritance, is so truly his as that where he has fallen? No litigation of man can despoil him of it, and even when he and his deeds are forgotten it is still his. So let him lie.

Everywhere from the forest came strong, damp odors of things fugitive and deciduous. The violently released sap of shell-splintered and broken trees mingled its odors with that other natural smell of falling leaf. Lush mosses exuding still deeper, earthier odors were folded about the broken shafts in soft, green velvet swathings. And some of these forest wounds were new, some old and almost healed, like the human griefs of the war.

At a sharp turn in the road we leave the motor, passing on foot many camouflaged dugouts, and, somewhat breathless, reach the collection of low wooden huts known as "Camp Wagram." Each little building has layers of fresh pine branches on its roof, and its sides are painted in piebald or zebra-like patterns.

We were shown into the dugout of the commandant, commanding the 363d Infantry, whom we found writing at a little pine table. He received us smiling, and not surprised, our visit having been announced by telephone. A smallish man with very attentive eyes, whose quiet exterior and strong Burgundy accent cover,

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I am told, a heart of gold, together with quick judgment and complete fearlessness.

He gives me a military cape to replace my heavy fur coat, and we start out to Camp Meudon, farther up, where we are presented to another commandant who is frankly, though politely, surprised to see a woman where no woman has been.

A few harmless jokes about being at Meudon, yet, alas! so far from Paris, are exchanged, after which, followed by the armed escort, we mount through the wet, shabby forest to the very top of the Molkenrain. There crouching in some bushes we peer out through them to the Hartmannswillerkopf, that culminating, coveted point of the great plateau, where men have wrestled unto death these four years past. Brown, withered, not a tree on it left, its form is traversed only by a long black line—the German trenches.

Behind and on each side of "Le Hartmann," as it is called "for short," is a great, misty, German plain; toward the left, in the extreme background, is the three-crested hill of the "Hohkoenigsberg"; great flamelike patches of cloud lay upon it, transmuting its stones and mortar into something gorgeous and unsubstantial. To our right and beyond stretched another great German plain, in front of which curtains of sun-shot cloud were falling and rising. One moment villages and fields and white ribbons of road shone, the next they would be blotted out by pillars of mist, and others came into view.

"If they see us, they will fire," warned the commandant as I made an involuntary movement to rise, when another quick diamond-like shower beat about us.

"But isn't it too dark?" I asked; that world of the Hartmann sector seemed so indistinct in shifting light and rain.

"They've seen us when it was darker than this," he

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answered, rather grimly, with the expression of one remembering lost men.

Passing to another vantage-ground of the Molkenrain, whence we could see the Sudel, now entirely in French hands, we met a group of blue men, emerging beautifully out of the colored mist under the silver heaven. They were carrying hot soup to other blue men in the brown trenches of the Hartmann.

Standing for no uncompleted emotions as far as the Hartmann is concerned, Captain Perdrizet stopped a glowing-eyed, red-cheeked, black-haired Meridional stripling and told him to let me have a taste from the can he was carrying. I drank, thinking "there are many ways of winning the war," from a dipper for which a trusty, much-camouflaged hand had first to hunt in its steaming depths. As I thanked him I wondered within myself should I wish him a quick young death or a long life and a toothless old age? As will be seen I'm obsessed by the veterans.

About this time Commandant Moreteaux said: "But Madame will only have seen the Hartmann in mist and rain. Why not come a second time and lunch with me to-morrow?"

I looked at Captain Perdrizet, he at me, and both being, as I have said, mortals of "first movement," and knowing holy enthusiasm, we accept—though I bethink me somewhat late of our chief, the commandant of the Military Mission, who marks the shining course of my Alsatian hours, and who might have other plans. It was "to see."

As we came down in the gathering gloom, over the shell-ravaged sides of the mountain, I was conscious of a deep, in some way sweet, feeling that I might be going to see, to *feel*, it all again. And, too, as is the way of the heart, it seemed then somewhat to belong to me.

I was not as one who never more will pass.

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Everywhere in the brown, wet forest pale-blue forms stood aside to make way for us. As we reached Camp Wagram, where I re-exchanged the long, blue military cape for my coat, great shots began to echo through the hills, and the flare of guns illuminated the thin, dark, scraggly crests. It was still war. Near, so near, men were breathing out their souls, to be "scattered by winds and high, tempestuous gusts."

As we stood making our adieux, a radio was brought to Commandant Moreteaux, and we heard then and there that Foch had received the German Parliamentaries, and given them seventy-two hours, from eleven o'clock of that day, Friday, to say "Yes" or to say "No." Nobody spoke when he ceased reading. It seemed suddenly like the world's end.

And it's a good, quick place to get one's world-news, there in the Hartmannswillerkopf sector!

Then we said another and quite hasty *au revoir*, fearing night would descend upon the valley before we could, for the motor had to go without lights, and there was many a turn and twist at which to take a skidding chance at fate.

The forest got blacker and blacker, there was the sound of rushing waters, the rattle of munition-wagons, the stamp of hoofs, and voices of dimly outlined men whose tunics were quite white in the twilight. The odors, too, deepened with the coming darkness. I was chilled in body and soul, for were not they also there, those other tens of thousands, whose beds were dug in these damp hills, mingling in some way with the living? How close the two worlds are I never knew until this war, where death is ever near, and sometimes sweet, and often, often young. The hoary Reaper with his scythe has been replaced by a figure, lithe and strong, a bugle in his hand.

As we reached the dark valley the cannon cracked



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again, again the night sky was illumined. The unnatural shapes of trees fallen one against the other at sharp angles were black in the twilight fog; the road was a loose, wet ribbon; more waters rushed. And who would see the Hartmannswillerkopf in sunshine? This damp, gray, afternoon robe of consecration, clasped with its clasp of emerald, carnelian, topaz, amethyst, like to the clasp of a high-priest, is its true garb. And the wide mantle of the November night was folding close over all its beauty and its grief.

At Bitschwiller we call on Madame Jules Scheuer. She knows irremediable grief and bears it with a noble courage. One of her sons fell far from her in Champagne; the other, mortally wounded on the Hartmann, was brought down one winter night to die in her arms, and lies forever in the sweet, broad valley of the Thur, claiming so little of his vast inheritance. . . .

To the *popote* at eight. Six Protestant pastors had been announced to dine with us, two of mine in the act of being convoyed through Alsace by four of theirs. The Americans were "looking over the ground," they delicately informed me. I didn't ask "what ground"; with my name it might have sounded argumentative, which I never, never am.

Now during these days of my Alsatian visit I had thought, at intervals, that it might very possibly be a nuisance to have a woman always tagging at some polite heel or other, but when I saw that six pastors could happen to them all at once, I then and there ceased forever feeling apologetic. I even fell to thinking that they hadn't done so badly when they got me.

I can't say that, at dinner, all went as merry as a marriage feast, because the Americans didn't speak French, nor the officers English, except de Maroussem, who could but didn't, even seeming but remotely interested in watching them consume the plenteous repast.

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And as for myself, I was too dull with fatigue and too spent with the emotions of the Hartmann to be able to do any "paying in person." For a time, too, those men of my race were the strangers to me, not the blue-clad men of the Mission.

Suddenly, as we were unsuspectingly taking our coffee, one of the shepherds began saying prayers over us with a drop in his voice after each sentence, thanking God for their being there, for our being there, for Alsace being there, and I don't remember what else, save that it was fairly comprehensive. After which everybody signed everybody's menu, and then as they were on the run through the garden of Alsace, lingering nowhere, though scattering possibly seedless blessings everywhere, they said good-by and went out forever into the rain. And they ought to have thanked God for the dinner, which was a triumph, with vintage wines served by two orderlies, under Monsieur de Maroussem's chic though somewhat detached eye.

As the door closed we fell to talking as people would when six clergymen who came all at once leave all at once, though unexpectedly one came back for his umbrella—producing a momentary hush.

One of mine had generously given me several boxes of cigarettes, produced from deep, sagging pockets, and we stopped to have an "evangelical puff" as some one called it, while I tried to explain what "nervous prostration" is to those Frenchmen—and to explain why the largest of the American clergymen, very nice, and looking like a lion-tamer, as some one remarked, could have had it, and been in bed with it, for a year. "*Chacun a sa petite misère,*" one of them said, "*mais c'est étrange, tout de même.*"

One of the officers of the St.-Amarin *popote*, Debrix, is the image of the famous Coligny, and so called by his comrades, but he is, it appears, an excellent Papist,

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while Perdrizet, who, if he had on a suit of mail, might have borne the banner of the Virgin, following Godefroy de Bouillon into Jerusalem, is an equally excellent Protestant, his family having fled to Montbéliard after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, and these two are continually being joked about their natural—or unnatural—camouflage. But in these days nobody really cares, alack! alack! what anybody believes, scarcely, alack! what anybody does, especially if they are quiet about it and it doesn't interfere with the other person's plans. And that's why the war will be forgotten just as soon as the newspapers stop talking about it and business looks up and the women get new clothes, which they need. However, as the dead soldiers will mostly be in heaven, their smiles won't be too unkind, though their language!—if it's anything like what I've discovered they use on earth!

I was finally convoyed home by a largish contingent of the sons of Mars. As soon as we stepped from the door we were in ankle-deep mud; the sky, black and flat and close, had a vaultlike heaviness, and the fog was so clinging that I was as if wrapped in some soft, wet stuff. Monsieur and Madame Helmer were kindly waiting up for me, but mercifully let our good-night be short. And here I am with no more thought of sleep than a meadow-lark at dawn, though that's my only resemblance to the meadow-lark, for I am tired, dead-tired, and my hair is still wet with the mists of the Hartmann.

And how shall one sleep who has so lately touched the fringe of the mountain-couch where many soldiers lie?

### XIII

“LES CRETES.” “DÉJEUNER” AT CAMP WAGRAM. THE  
FREUNDSTEIN AND ITS PHANTOMS

**N**OVEMBER 9th.—This morning at eight-thirty we started out, Captain Perdrizet, Lieutenant Debrix, and I, for the famous trip along the crest of the mountains that, on one side, hang over the valley of the Thur, and on the other fall toward the Germanies. Having beheld with my eyes the first and second line defenses of these crests and of the “Hartmann,” I have come to some slight realization of how men have lived (and died) four winters through on these weather- and shell-swept heights.

We had to go to the very end of the shining valley before beginning the ascent to the crests, passing Wesserling, situated so charmingly on its eminence in the ancient moraine, commanding the valley from both ways. Once upon a time the Château of Wesserling belonged to Prince Löwenstein, Abbot of Murbach, the history of the great Abbey of Murbach being closely bound up with that of these valleys, for Charlemagne gave to the first abbot, St.-Pyrmin, the whole country of the Thur, with St.-Amarin and Thann and all the lesser towns. In the eighteenth century the Abbey was converted into a noble Chapter with residence, and a big new church, at Guebwiller, now in German hands. But the Chapter had a short life there, and probably not a gay one, and during the Revolution it was suppressed.

The vineyards round about have been renowned

## LES CRÊTES, CAMP WAGRAM, FREUNDSTEIN

since time immemorial, and on Guebwiller's southern slopes there is a wine celebrated even among the most celebrated of Alsace, which enlivens without making noisy, and inspires without depressing (evidently what the juice of the grape was meant to do when the vine grew on the first hillsides of the world). It is called "*Kitterle brisemollets*" ("Kitterle break your calves"), those whom it delights evidently not journeying far, except in fancy.

A great book could be written about the wines of Alsace, the soft, gleaming, light-colored wines of this land of sunny slopes, which may become even as a Mecca for pilgrims arriving "dry" from over the seas. In fact, quite a delightful perspective opens itself out.

From Wolxheim comes a wine, once the favorite of Napoleon, which was always found on the imperial table. There are the wines of Rouffach, "home town" of the husband of Madame Sans-Gêne; of Kaisersberg, known fashionably and pertinently as "Montlibre" for a short space during the Revolution, and by the "Rang" of Thann; Alsatians once swore, "*Que le Rang te heurte!*" ("May the Rang strike you!") There is, too, an exceptional, ancient, red vintage called "*Sang des Turcs*," whose name recalls the twilight days of Turkish invasions and Soliman the Great.

But the Alsatian wines are mostly made from compact bunches of little, white, sweet grapes, with irislike colors shading them richly. The inhabitants, holding their *pinard* in great veneration, feel it a sacred duty to see that it is good. It is called colloquially "*thé d'Octobre*" ("October tea") one of the officers told me, after the manner of the famous "*purée septembrale*" ("September purée") of Rabelais, who, it appears, greatly appreciated the wines of these hillsides. But they are pitiless concerning poor wines, which they call "fiddlers' wines," or "*Sans-le-Sou*," or "*gratte-gosier*" ("throat-

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scratcher"), and "*grimpe-muraille*" ("wall-climber"), as he who drinks them is apt to try that and other useless feats, instead of sitting and dreaming or joking and being happy. These bad wines are also known collectively and disdainfully as *vins des trois hommes* (wines of three men) because it appears it takes three men to accomplish the feat of drinking a single glass—the man who supports the drinker, the man who forces the treacherous liquid down his throat, and the third the unhappy victim. Now the once rich soil of the ancient mellow vineyards has got thin and stony; for the men who have grown them have been occupied with killing these past four years, and neglect for even a season can spoil the best and oldest vines.

In times of peace there are many textile manufactories in these valleys, too. After the Napoleonic wars *la main d'œuvre* (labor) was scarce, just as it will be after our war, workmen being brought even from India, and to this day in the midst of modern machinery here, in the valley, there are places where they still keep to the ancient block system of stamping cloth, with the ritual hammer-stroke, this process giving more fadeless and beautiful colors than any machine-stamped, aniline-dyed stuffs that ever were. Such cloths are still called "*Indiennes*."

And all around here the Swedes did as tidy a bit of work as was ever done by invading armies, the seventeenth century being for the valley a century of ravage and desolation. In one of the books<sup>1</sup> Mr. Helmer gave me last night I read that the cantons were so reduced during the Thirty Years' War that places like Bitschwiller could register but four adults and eleven children, Moosch eleven adults and twenty-three children, St.-Amarin thirteen adults and forty-four children,

<sup>1</sup>Gilles Sifferlen, *La Vallée de St.-Amarin*, 1908.

## LES CRÊTES, CAMP WAGRAM, FREUNDSTEIN

and so on, the chief of their diet being acorns and roots and mice and other classic nutriment of epochs of destruction. There were moments when the Imperials, the Swedes, the French, and the Lorrains disputed the territory, and various troops camped on the Hartmannswiller and descended to the valley—and the *Roi Très Catholique* was the ally of the Swedes, and the Abbey and its territories were under the Holy German Empire. But whoever was momentarily in possession, it was always disastrous for the inhabitants of the valley—and of what the children suffered these fatal figures I have quoted evoke some dull perception.

As we pass the pleasant villages of Felling and Odern and Krüt, all shining in the radiance of a strong though intermittent sun, with here and there scarfs of rainbow-like mists draped about them, we foolishly mocked the weather wisdom of Mr. Helmer, who, on being asked as we started out, if the weather would hold, had regretfully said, "No."

At Krüt we start to ascend the Wildenstein. Gorgeous matutinal effects continued their prismatic play everywhere on soft and fathomless black hills, the yellow lights on the *mélèze* almost outshining the sun. On one mountain-side they made a line as would some procession of pilgrims bearing torches, and one almost thought one saw cowed heads and heard the chanting of a "*Pilgerchor*."

The air we were breathing was strong yet tenuous, and I felt a great refreshment and exhilaration.

In these wide days of bending the hills, of folding the valleys, there has been, as it were, some unpacking of my mind, some shaking out of my soul, things long hidden have come to light, and the patched lining of memory has been freshened. Almost every event has appeared, accompanied by its secret meanings, in its relationship to secondary, generally unapparent, signifi-

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cances. I have had, too, a quickened sensitiveness to the beauty of the natural world. And can a journey do more for one than this?

It was a stiff mount to Huss in a sort of distilled pine fragrance, with a continual looking back, where the billowing lightsome pink and yellow scarfs, woven of sun and mist, were flinging themselves more and more wastefully about the shining valleys. Near the top our motor's *bougies* got clogged with oil, and a thin, white fog, now opaque, now sun-shot, began to close in on us. We arranged the *bougies*, but there was nothing for human hands to do about that white fog, and we found ourselves suddenly, at a turn in the road, tightly inclosed by it, and were seemingly alone on the heights, where the only thing that appeared to grow and thrive were the stretches of wire entanglements, like great patches of dried heather. Everywhere were groupings of black crosses, with their tricolor badges, above wind-swept, fog-enveloped, sun-bathed graves, dug on these treeless heights.

But there, in that thin, high air, I suddenly became conscious of the volatilization of the spirit, and knew those graves indeed for empty. . . .

One last time, as we passed Camp Bousat, named after the colonel who fell here, and looking like a mining-camp, the mist shifted, showing the jeweled, gossamer-clad valley, and then we were again fog-locked, and I saw its beauty no more—only brown seas of wire entanglements losing themselves in those shrouds of cottony white, which lifted here and there to show some detail of the strange life on the bleak crests. There were dugouts everywhere, and very low buildings camouflaged in wood-colors and crisscross designs. In them were men washing, men cooking, men smoking, all in astonishment, which sometimes gave place to grins, and doubtless pleasantries in the best Gallic



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manner, at the appearance of the weaker sex on their grim, bare mountain-tops.

We passed endless gun-emplacements, and cemented munition-depots, barely visible through thick layers of pine branches, and near them heads would be sticking out of what seemed mere holes in the earth.

About this time Captain Perdrizet, whose ardent spirit had been considerably dampened by the closing in of that thick, cold fog, began also to fear we should be late for *déjeuner* at Camp Wagram, from which, it appeared, we were separated by several valleys and a few hills of the eternal sort. The motor's *bougies* got clogged again (what part of its being they are I know not); the chauffeur got moody, Captain Perdrizet more visibly vexed, Debrix quieter and more philosophic (he is a *littérateur* when there's no war, and has written a beautiful poem about Thann); as for myself, knowing strange and enkindling things were behind me, others doubtless before me, and that whatever happened would be interesting, I felt myself sweetly detached from time and circumstances, which for one of deadly punctuality is saying much.

A peculiarity of the motor's ailment was that it couldn't go down as fast as it could go up, so, a-limp, a-crawl, a-hump, we descended into a valley packed extravagantly with that thick, unspun cotton-like atmosphere, leaving the dead and living alike to their bare heights. At a certain village whose name I forget (I can hear the reader saying, "Thank God she has forgotten it, and we can perhaps get on to Camp Wagram for lunch")—at a certain village, however, I repeat, two ravens went across our path, going to the left of the motor. Said Perdrizet, on taking in the dire occurrence, his color like to the white fog and his hair and mustache like to the raven's, "We'll never get there!"

Now I am superstitious, too, and glory in it, for, though

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it gives me a good deal of otherwise avoidable worry, it colors life. From time to time friends and circumstances load me with a new one, and I go staggering on. Two ravens crossing the road to the left *was* a novelty, and I see anxious days to come when motoring for engagements where one must be in time—or one thinks one must. And superstition has nothing to do with the processes of the brain, rather lodges itself elusively anywhere and everywhere in one's being.

The two officers consulted their timepieces again, finding a trifling and consoling difference of twenty minutes (looked at from one way). The chauffeur's watch didn't go, and I never carry one. As the motor stopped again, Perdrizet began to fidget extremely much, and to say that if it weren't for me he'd kill the chauffeur, and decided that we couldn't take in the village of Goldbach, almost entirely destroyed in this war, where Madame Sans-Gêne first saw the light of day, and later the duke.

However, in spite of the two ravens and the *Erdwible*,<sup>1</sup> or other spirits of those forest-hills, we at last found ourselves twisting up the road to Camp Wagram, an hour late, and we began to sound noisily the horn of arrival. The commandant and his young captain had been long awaiting us on their hillside. With many apologies on our part because of the delay, and on theirs because of the fog, we went into the little, low mess-room built of rough boards, with its heavy camouflage of fresh pine branches on its low roof, its windows of oiled paper, and its sides painted like a green-and-yellow tiger.

The commandant did something to his watch as we sat down, and then gallantly yet unblushingly remarked that it was just 12.30, but that even *had* we been late it would have only meant a longer anticipation of something pleasant. My companions both gave smiles of

<sup>1</sup> Fairies: kindred to the "green people" of Ireland.

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satisfaction for that, on the Hartmann, where men are almost entirely concerned with killing or being killed, the commandant was living up to the French reputation in more ways than one. I thought, too, that it was a very happy beginning, looking well, so to speak, among the *hors d'œuvre*. Captain Perdrizet had told me the day before that if the commandant had to requisition every man and mule in the sector there would be an excellent lunch. Now the very good food was accompanied by a delicious, warm Burgundy from the commandant's own part of the world, and at dessert a bottle of Pommery & Greno, very cold, a souvenir of his service in Champagne, was poured. All drank sparingly of both, after the manner of Latins. Some asked delicately, even humbly, as one really wanting information, concerning the rumor that the United States were "going dry," and wondered why it was to be. I rather wondered myself, up there on the Hartmann, forgetful for a moment of the unpleasant things I know about distilled liquors in the Home of the Free and the Land of the Brave.

Said the commandant, puzzled, looking at his not large glass of ruby liquid, "*Un peu de vin en mangeant, tout de même? . . .*" ("But a little wine at one's meals? . . .")

Said another officer, with a quickly restrained gesture of distaste: "*Est-ce vrai qu'il faut boire seul et debout et entre les repas en Amérique?*" ("Is it true that one must drink alone and standing up and between meals in America?")

I was saved an answer to this question, which was a fairly near picture of some of the national customs, by the shaking, deafening sound of an exploding shell. Those paper windows didn't seem to mind it, though everything on the table rattled. The commandant looked at the captain, who disappeared, returning almost

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immediately to say that an artilleryman with his horses had been killed—and the doctor, who had started to the door, sat down again.

A few minutes later, as we were beginning the *tourne-dos grillés, maître d'hôtel*, the telephone rang, and a radio was brought in hot and given to me for a souvenir. It was one sent by the German parliamentaries saying that as they were unable to get back to Germany by road on account of broken bridges, they would be obliged to proceed by air, and that their 'plane would be marked by two white flames—*zwei weisse Flammen*.

"It sounds safe, but all the same I don't envy the officer detailed to accompany them," said somebody; and they all smiled and seemed glad they weren't in the airplane. I've noticed in the past two or three days that military men are beginning to prize life again.

I was sitting opposite the commandant, on my right was Doctor Lantieri with four stripes on his sleeve, and on my left was young Captain de Santis, who had met us. Curiously enough, both were of Corsican descent, and showed it so distinctly that when some one mentioned the great Italian bag of Austrian prisoners after the cessation of hostilities, and how the "Tiger" had said you simply couldn't hold them back, I got a bit worried, though nobody else seemed to mind.

The young captain took from his pocket a couple of proclamations dropped by German aviators on the Hartmann yesterday—and furthermore presented me with a large panoramic view of the Champagne sector, where he had fought. I thought it was something rightly belonging to his family, but there was that in his proud, Corsican gesture which forbade refusal.

After which, being the only woman who had ever lunched in the H. W. K. sector, I was photographed by the doctor with the four stripes. Then in a fog thickly enfolding us, as well as the mountains, we

# The German People Offers Peace.

The new German democratic government has this programme:

**"The will of the people is the highest law."**

The German people wants quickly to end the slaughter.

The new German popular government therefore has offered an

## Armistice

and has declared itself ready for

## Peace

on the basis of justice and reconciliation of nations.

It is the will of the German people that it should live in peace with all peoples, honestly and loyally.

What has the new German popular government done so far to put into practice the will of the people and to prove its good and upright intentions?

a) The new German government has appealed to President Wilson to bring about peace.

**It has recognized and accepted all the principles which President Wilson proclaimed as a basis for a general lasting peace of justice among the nations.**

b) The new German government has solemnly declared its readiness to evacuate Belgium and to restore it.

c) The new German government is ready to come to an honest understanding with France about

## Alsace-Lorraine.

d) The new German government has restricted the **U-boat War.**

**No passengers steamers not carrying troops or war material will be attacked in future.**

e) The new German government has declared that it will withdraw all German troops back over the German frontier.

f) — The new German government has asked the Allied Governments to name commissioners to agree upon the practical measures of the evacuation of Belgium and France.

These are the deeds of the new German popular government. Can these be called mere words, or bluff, or propaganda?

Who is to blame, if an armistice is not called now?

Who is to blame if daily thousands of brave soldiers needlessly have to shed their blood and die?

Who is to blame, if the hitherto undestroyed towns and villages of France and Belgium sink in ashes?

Who is to blame, if hundreds of thousands of unhappy women and children are driven from their homes to hunger and freeze?

# The German people offers its hand for peace.



## LES CRÊTES, CAMP WAGRAM, FREUNDSTEIN

started out with gas-masks, compasses and pistols, plus an armed escort, toward the German lines, for they wanted to show me the ruins of the Castle of Freundstein, now an observation post, directly overhanging the great plain I had seen yesterday. Much banter between the commandant and Captain Perdrizet, their eyes very alert, as to the right road, the one that wouldn't lead us into the enemies' hands. Suddenly a firing of French guns began right over our befogged heads, with a near swish and crack, and answering duller German guns. In the thick fog, even those men accustomed to sensations seemed quite keyed up, and the commandant had become like some woodsman, looking closely at the trunks of battered trees, some with old scars, some with new, and other indications, invisible to me, along the path. Finally, at a certain crossroad, he stopped, saying: "*That* would lead us straight to them. Even now a pointed casque might appear, though, with the probable armistice in sight, they will be less venturesome."

I: "What would they do?"

He: "Throw hand-grenades first and then"—he looked at the others—"there'd be a scuffle."

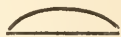
It didn't sound attractive, I must say, the potentialities of the fog seeming even quite horrid, and I was entirely ready to hunt in the opposite direction for the path to the Freundstein, which, according to the compass, lay pleasantly due west. Dreadful, unexploded things, too, were lying about, in new and ancient shell-holes, and there was much careful stepping among broken tree-trunks and half-demolished barbed wire, and I got a horrid rip in the last of my American boots.

Here and there was a black cross, and the possibility of being underneath one, instead of above one, if we *did* meet a German patrol, came before me. With all one's poetizing or philosophizing, there *is* a difference,

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and one's a long time dead—as I know Lieutenant Lavallée would agree.

Suddenly the path began to rise, the commandant giving an exclamation of relief as he saw a steep ladder almost in front of us, apparently leaning against a wall of fog. Captain Perdrizet's eyes began to shine again; he'd been quite subdued, not to say cast down.

"It's like a scene of opera, isn't it?" he exclaimed. And then he proceeded up the ladder, tipped, it seemed, at an angle of forty-five degrees the wrong way, I wondering how on earth I was to get down, unless I fell. Then we descend from a ledge over heaps of century-old, moss-grown mortar deep into the tower, and, passing through a long, subterranean passage, find ourselves in a tiny, closet-like room of ageless masonry. Stationed at an opening are two men with telephones over their ears, binoculars, compass, and charts lying on the sill of the opening in the masonry, which is shaped like this  and looks to the northeast, toward the Hartmann and the Sudel, and other consecrated heights, as well as the great, covered German plain—whose contours were more impenetrably veiled than its future. I had had a feeling, crouching in the wet bushes the day before, gazing out on its wide splendors in shifting sun and shower, that I would look no more upon it, nor upon the little, worn, brown crest of the Hartmann, cut by the black line of the German trenches, running through the naked wilderness of branchless trees—though I had not known why.

When we had blithely retraced our steps to the high-road, cracking many uncomplicated jokes, pleasing largely because we felt that kindness toward the universe so distinctive of the front, when no actual killing is going on, we suddenly encountered, almost bumping into them, two swearing, sweating, heavily laden *poilus*, who had got lost in the fog looking for their detachment.



## LES CRÊTES, CAMP WAGRAM, FREUNDSTEIN

On seeing us they threw down their accoutrement on a wet bank and expressions strong and classic began to cut the air. A sergeant, risen up from somewhere at the unmistakable sounds, ran toward them, calling and gesticulating wildly. But, wiping their brows, they continued. They had taken the last step they were going to on that so-and-so and so-and-so mountain, and if they found their detachment or not they *enfiché'd* themselves, only they didn't use this elegant word to express their sentiments. The sergeant got more excited, and cried, "*Espèces de types*" and . . . . . At this the commandant, foreseeing that the artillery exchange might get too loud for feminine ears, said to the biggest one (both were enormous), seeing his number: "You are looking for Camp Meudon, *mon ami*. It's farther up; in an hour you are there. Follow the path up and always to the right."

On which, like lambs, they who had sworn not to move from that spot till the hill crumbled shouldered their accoutrement, thanked Perdrizet in the best French manner for the cigarettes he gave them, and disappeared quickly, the strains of "Madelon" being loudly borne back to us on the fog.

"*Ce sont des enfants*" ("They are children"), said the commandant, with his kind smile, "and *good* children."

And that was the last word I heard concerning the war and "*les enfants de la Patrie*" on the Hartmann, for the hour of farewells had come.

And how deep was the mutual well-wishing enfolding that moment those who have seen peace breaking over the graves of the Hartmann, as I and they saw it, alone can know.

As we parted, they taking a higher path, disappearing almost immediately in the fog, and we the lower road back to the motor, I suddenly understood, too, the new

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look one sees in all men's faces. Everywhere it is the same. It is that of men who have been ready to die, to "separate from the pleasant habit of existence, the sweet fable of living," but who suddenly know they need not die, at least not now—nor *that* way.

Coming down the heavily shrouded mountain-slope as quickly as possible, to be in time for my adieux to St.-Amarin before hastening over to Masevaux that same evening, Captain Perdrizet told me the legend of the "Phantoms of Freundstein." I was then at a point of fatigue where present emotions were no longer possible, and time works such wonders that the most tragic tale of Freundstein, the Rock of Friends, was even as a poultice. And I could still be interested in hearing that to this very day there is a proverb, "*Er isch vom Freundstein*" ("He is from Freundstein"), which, said of a man, means so hospitable is he that his house belongs to his friends. And the legend runs after this fashion:

The last of the lords of Freundstein, Count Jerome, had a beautiful daughter, Christine by name, whom he adored, and whom he took with him everywhere, even to the chase, for which purpose a gorgeous litter had been made wherein she might rest. The Lord of Geroldseck, passing by one day, saw her as she lay asleep. Struck by her loveliness, he swore then and there that he would make her his.

Soon after he proceeded to Freundstein to ask her hand in marriage, but she answered that it was useless, as her heart already belonged to a certain very noble cavalier of Thann. Her father gave the same answer. One night a great noise was heard before the gates of Freundstein; it was the Lord of Geroldseck come with his vassals to take the castle and its lovely young *châtelaine* by assault. Freundstein resisted for three days. Then, seeing it was in vain, Christine and her

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father took final refuge in the high tower whose ruins rise above the chamber where we found the men with the telephones strapped to their ears. There had once been a sloping stairway in the tower, so broad that a horseman might ascend it. Up this road the Lord of Geroldseck pursued them. Arrived at the top, he was about to seize the girl, but her father, taking her in his arms, leaped with her into space. The gesture that Geroldseck made to retain her whom he loved caused him to lose his own balance, and he, too, fell and was killed. And their ghosts forever haunt the spot, and the echo, no matter what words are cried to the hills, always gives back the last, despairing call of Geroldseck:

*“Je l’aurai, je l’aurai, je l’aurai.”*<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>“I will have thee, I will have thee, I will have thee.”

## XIV

### RETURN TO MASEVAUX

NOVEMBER 9th.—I was received so warmly by the amiable Demoiselles Braun, who had my room ready for me; so kindly by Captain Bernard, who came a moment afterward to tell me he would call for me at seven-fifteen; so dearly by Laferrière, who also called for me, that I felt I had indeed got "home." As we were walking along to the *popote* Captain Tirman joined us in the darkness and told us that Bavaria had proclaimed itself a republic, and that there was news (military news by radio) of the abdication of the Kaiser. Somebody cried, "*Demain, de quoi demain sera-t-il fait?*" as we entered the house where the little cat, the forgetful, unabashed little cat, who but three short days before had done such well-nigh disastrous things to my fur coat, also awaited me.

Again a charming dinner, conversation about that first August of the war, the retreat from Mons, of Charleroi, and many, many other places; of forced marches and aching feet; of fatigue and hunger and thirst, now packed away gloriously in memory, though sometimes the strange look appeared on their faces as they talked. Stories were told of those who had gone to "*faire un bridge à Limoges*"<sup>1</sup> and remained there, and of others, like Mangin, who had come back, Mangin,

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<sup>1</sup> "To play bridge at Limoges" means that an officer is temporarily—or permanently—retired before the age limit. "*Etre limogé*," to be limoged, is another familiar form.

## RETURN TO MASEVAUX

the booty of whose glorious Tenth Army now overflows the Place de la Concorde. And of Foch who had *nearly* gone there. And of the immense glory hanging over each and every battlefield, for, though black crosses were evoked, each was entwined with colors too bright for human eyes. And then we turned our thoughts from *tempus lachrymarum* to the New Day, in whose sun, though not like to the brightness of those fallen, we all shine. The *long* destiny is heavy and dark beside the light, bright way of heroes, and never did one realize till now how truly the gods love those whom they snatch young. We, after all, as one of the officers remarked, will die in our beds or by accident—and is it so desirable?

Then Sérin told his oft-repeated, but now dearly loved, story of "*Bravo, Capitano,*" of the *Capitano* who thanked the Madonna for the thirteen trenches and the sea of barbed wire between himself and the enemy, but which I won't tell. And Captain Antoni told the story of the wounded Boche who was given the *Croix de Guerre*, and how the French general said, as he entered the hospital ward:

"Are these the brave men who so valiantly held their position on the twenty-fourth? With inexpressible pleasure I give each one his well-merited *Croix de Guerre*," and then proceeded down the line of beds. On Number 33 was lying a man with closely bandaged head, only one gleaming eye visible, and the *Croix de Guerre* was pinned also on his valiant breast, and if it was removed by the Angel of Death or by orders of the colonel I forget. Neither is it recorded if the German smiled.

And I told of the swift passing of the autos, mine and the commandant's, on the dark hills of the Route Joffre, when I was coming back from St.-Amarin and he going there. How sadly I had seen its kind lights rise along the heights and disappear, and there had been

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no friendly handclasp on the hills, nor words of thanks from me in the dim light of the blurred Pleiades and the young, half-veiled, white moon.

After dinner some one hazarded the word "bridge," but there must have been that in my eye making for solitude rather than companionship, for the next thing I heard from some Frenchman, perceptive as to woman's looks, was:

*"Madame est sans doute bien fatiguée et nous jouerons demain."*

And soon I was stumbling home on one or two or three blue-sleeved arms, in the inky darkness of a starless and moonless Masevaux.

I had found St.-Amarin charming, and I left with deep regret, but at Masevaux I was experiencing the sensation, very agreeable, I must say, of one who, having wandered, returns to his or her first love; and any one who has done it will know exactly how I felt, and I don't have to tell them. As for those who have never returned, they wouldn't understand if I did explain.

## XV

### THE VIGIL OF THE ARMISTICE

*"The Star is fall'n and Time is at his period"*

NOVEMBER 11th, 1 A.M.—At ten-thirty Captain Tirman came back to the *popote* where we were playing bridge—Sérin, Laferrière, Toussaint, and I. He was very pale, but there was something shining about his face.

*"Ça y est, l'armistice."*

Dead silence; we don't even drop our cards. In his excitement a very naughty soldier's word escapes him. He turns away in consternation, and the others, somewhat appalled, too, at last drop their cards. I try not to smile. General recovery; they hope I didn't catch it. It was sufficient, however, to break that strange feeling of *absence* of feeling that each one of us was experiencing.

*"Alors c'est fini, la guerre,"* some one finally said in a dazed way, and with the words the cruel thing seemed to drop heavily from us, as would some hideous, exhausting burden.

Toussaint, with his far look of one who loves forests, very strongly marked, said, "To think that it has found us like this playing bridge at the *popote!*"

Sérin: "I'll not go to bed to-night."

I: "Oh, my friends!" and then nothing more—my knees suddenly as if broken.

Laferrière (very quietly, after a pause): "I cannot but think of those who are not here." And his words

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evoked great shining bands of the dear young, pressed closely, one against the other, out of their flesh, crowding the heavens.

Then Sérin, again with his *bon sourire d'enfant*, "Il faut boire."

A bottle of *Asti spumante* is produced by Laferrière, who in a dreamy way remembers that he is *chef de popote*. The stock of champagne is exhausted. Nearly every day, and sometimes twice a day for the past week, have not the radios, plucked out of the air by the commandant, plus the beauteous *communiqués*, necessitated the opening of bottles even unto the last?

Sérin, as we drink, all of us paralyzed by the sudden cessation of the world-horror, tells how one of his gendarmes would keep referring to the armistice as "*la Mistie*," in two words, and we drink to *la Mistie*. But in spite of the too, too simple joke, how still, yet stern was each one's heart!

About this time Toussaint seizes from the stove the marble "hunk" (it's the only word for it), "*Amor condusse noi*," and makes as if to throw it at the dead and gone Oberforster's clock, stopped, as I said, some four years ago at 12.25.

Sérin again, with his most childlike expression: "*La Paix a éclaté!* Peace has broken out, and I will break out worse than peace if I don't do something!"

As I have said, Masevaux at that hour—it had got to be eleven o'clock—was as lustrous as an ink-pot, and all being still the prey of a strange paralysis of feeling, nobody suggested anything.

Peace, lovely, precious peace, dreamed of, desired through years of anguish, so *redly* bought in money of the heart's blood, was ours! Those crowding hosts gone out into the "dateless night" seemed suddenly to return, the only moving things on a stunned earth. They had not renounced in vain the dear clothing of the flesh.



## THE VIGIL OF THE ARMISTICE

But how could we understand in one moment the immensity of what had happened? Never have I felt myself so small, so almost non-existent—an insect that had fortuitously *not* been crushed. But the soul's great converging point *was* reached. The war was done and won. Men need no longer kill each other by the tens of thousands, nor need women by the millions, because of it, weep.

We touched glasses again, but quietly, oh so quietly!

Some one sighs and no one speaks. After a while Toussaint, standing by the stove, again fingers "*Amor noi condusse*," but it is taken out of his hands by one of the officers. Then Sérin suggests waking up the curé, getting the keys of the church, and ringing the bells. Tirman, in authority in the absence of the commandant, still at St.-Amarin, is gripped by that conservatism known to each and every one in command at great moments, and becomes cautious, even suspicious.

"*Mais non, c'est peut-être tout de même une blague. Attendons jusqu'à demain.*" (He has quite recovered from his naughty word.)

Some one insists, "But Headquarters wouldn't joke about a thing like that."

Tirman, however, sits down at the piano, breaks out into the "Beautiful Blue Danube" and refuses to have the bells rung.

Sérin: "But what can one do here at Masevaux, black as the ace of spades and everybody snoring! *A Paris, il y aurait moyen de fêter même si c'est une blague!*"

I: "You are ready for anything."

He: "*Et comment!*" With a light in his straightforward good soldier's eye, and somewhat as a child longing for the impossible, "Just think of them in Paris, the restaurants full, *et des femmes sentant bon!*"<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The next morning I learned that Sérin, who had been "ready for anything, *et comment,*" had gathered together, being chief of the Gendarme

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Then four dazed officers accompanied by a dazed lady proceeded to awaken the postmaster from his slumbers. That heroic expression of rejoicing accomplished, we groped our way to the Place du Chapitre. In one of the *chanoinesse* houses Captain Bernard also dwells. Sometimes he has headaches on account of his wound, and to-night he had left us early to go home. On his not answering, some one hazarded the remark, "Perhaps he isn't there" (Heaven knows there's nowhere else to be but where one belongs, at Masevaux!), and it proved, indeed, to be pure defamation, for after a while he appeared at his window, or rather one heard him saying: "What's the matter? I was sleeping the sleep of the just."

"*Ça y est, l'armistice,*" some one cried out.

Then that man, who had been through every campaign and would forever wear "Verdun" stamped on his brow, made no answer.

And the night was dark, dark, the lovely moon too young to wait up, even for peace. We stumbled across the roughly paved square to my dwelling, and there we clasped hands with a strange, new clasp, and I, the woman and the American, wanted to say something, anything, but I had only begun, "*Mes chers amis,*" when I felt my voice break. I turned quickly and went in. What need to speak? Hearts lay open that night.

2 A.M.—Have been reading to quiet the heavily throbbing nerves. Picked out of the bookcase an hour ago *L'Histoire des Elèves de St.-Clément, Metz, 1871*. The names Gravelotte, St.-Privat, Malmaison, Sedan, confuse themselves in my mind with Ypres, Verdun, with Belleau Woods, with St.-Mihiel, Suippes, Eparges.

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Service, those of his men who were watching over the slumbers of Masevaux and quite simply "opened wine" for them, drinking solemnly again to "*la Mistie,*" while they as solemnly drank to the health of their respected chief. So do great hours fulfil themselves in little ways.

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I remember being told that in a terraced cemetery at St.-Mihiel three thousand Germans sleep. Though friend or foe, this night I see them all arisen, standing each one by his grave, clad in horizon-blue, khaki—or field-gray, all those who at some word of command had left the “pleasant habit of living, the sweet fable of existence,” and I whispered in great need of consolation, “I know that my Redeemer liveth and at the last day we shall rise.”

3 A.M.—And how shall sleep come, lovely sleep, desired like the morning? I slept not that night of the 3d of August which held the whole war in its darkness, and now with the youth of the world lying in “the grave’s quiet consummation,” shall I sleep?

Then slowly I became conscious of emanations from a giant, near people in defeat, not knowing what new thing to will, casting off the old fidelities, which once had given them the horn of human plenty. Thrones were shaking; “when *peoples* rage, *kings* must weep”; a world was to be remade out of empty places and blood. . . . I remembered how a poet<sup>1</sup> had cried out, as a prophet, after that other war:

*Ton peuple vivra,  
Mais ton empire penche, Allemagnet . . .*

And then I fell to thinking on love, I know not why, unless it was for the millions of lovers taken so suddenly from the world, or because of those yet left. How shall I say? But I knew that there were three things, not two—the lover, the beloved, and love. And of this last and separate thing one can have, in extremely sensitive states, impersonal cognizance, when for some reason (again what know I?) fancy has been set free,

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<sup>1</sup> Victor Hugo, *Alsace et Lorraine*, 1872.

Thy people will live,  
But thine empire topples, Germany! . . .

## ALSACE IN RUST AND GOLD

imagination stirred, and they go flinging themselves, not so much about the personal as about the common destiny. For a moment, so brief that it was gone even as it came, my soul caught the light that hangs over dear, persistent, far, illusory hills of fancy and inclination, and felt the mysterious break of feeling on the dim, shadowy lake of the heart. Vague, beaming forms passed along its shores, dissolving, lambent outlines, awakening desire for all the beauty of the wide earth, for things not in my personal destiny, and which, if they were to be, would be no better than that which is, not even so good. It was the greed of the human heart. . . .

And I cried out from my many-times-turned pillow, "O Life, O Love, O Death, O too, too fragile illusion of existence!"

4 *A.M.*—A soft, rich-toned bell is striking. A cold breath comes in at the window, a cock crows. There is the first sound of the click of sabots across the square; the Day of Peace is about to break over the world. But here in the bed of the young deserter from the German ranks, dead in Champagne, the war still has me in its arms and presses me close to its cold, oozing breast. The familiar odor of drying blood comes to me. Old groans strike on my ear. Those who, dying, are not dead crowd about me, and the "blue-black cloud" envelops me. I am weary unto dissolution. And Sleep, darling Sleep—not even a brush of your wings against me!

In this early morning, in the "little hour before dawn," the grief of the world sits tight about my heart—the icy hurt for things dead and gone, and the heaviness of those who awaken to a world empty of what was once the heart's concern and desire.

Old distastes, too, press on me, old distastes, I say, not hates. How hate any one like unto myself, hurry-

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ing along the night-path to the grave, mutual, frightened possessors of a shadowy, urgent immortality?

For these last few years I have entered, as it were, into some knowledge of charity, not that I like everybody, but I have come to realize that the distaste is often in myself and not due to some fault or lesser excellence in others. Truly in this whole journey I have encountered but two whom in an idle, hazy way I did not like; one was of an amorphous species and the other had judgments too violent, and at the same time too conventional and platitudinous, to permit interest. But even of these I shall ultimately think with indulgence.

5 A.M.—Closed the book recording the deeds of those young, long, long fallen of St.-Clement's school, and I pass to thinking how the word now on the lips of the world is freedom.

But is not the deepest wish of the human heart for love which is never free, but always in bond to that which is its hope and its desire? And I cried out concerning freedom what once in the world's greatest hour was cried out concerning truth, "What is it?" and begged that it might show its true form and aspect, above all to one who, invested with incredible power by a great people, would seem to hold even the lightnings in his hand.

More sabots click across the square, and a pale light sifts in at the top of the curtains. It's the eighth day of Creation. Innumerable men have stood (and so near me) their last night through in the trenches. . . .

Yesterday with its happenings seems a thousand years ago. I had motored with Laferrière to lunch at Dannemarie across a rich plain, through Morzwiller, where Alan Seeger spent a week with the Foreign Legion, and spun who knows which of his young and gorgeous fancies?

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Now, as then, the long street of Morzwiller was crowded with a highly colored, exotic regiment, and we were stopped a moment by a detachment passing. In front of the red-roofed, cream-colored inn, with its yellowing grapevine clinging close and flat, a young officer in the strong, mustard-tinted khaki and red *checchia* of the Moroccans was getting off his horse, a blooded, white, long-tailed beast of Araby; on his breast was a blaze of decorations and there was something implacable in his young glance as he looked about, and something very straight in his mien—a man who had been at his enemy's very throat, or drawn the sucking bayonet out all red. Two or three men of his regiment, wearing also their crimson *checchias*, were sitting at a table drinking a light-yellow wine. A woman came out, emptied a pail, called to a cat. A very young girl behind her made a slight sign to one of the men sitting at the table. In another minute we had passed on.

Everywhere in the rich fields were great brown stretches of barbed-wire entanglements, repeating the rusty tones of the beech forests which fringe them. I asked Laferrière what would become of those thousands upon thousands of kilometers of barbed wire. He answered indifferently, as one does of things past, "Little by little the peasants will use the poles for their kitchen fires and the wire for their hedges."

And we continue through that flat yellow and green and brown world to Dannemarie, one of the "territories" of the reconquered triangle, drawing up before some sort of government building, known to German and to French administrators, in and out of which American soldiers are now passing. I ask one of them where their officers are quartered, thinking to pay my respects after lunch. There is a vagueness as he asks of a passing comrade, "Say, 'ain't we got a major some-

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where here?" The flooding Americanism of my soul is for a moment stemmed; then we go over to the *popote*, where we are to lunch with Lieutenant Ditandy, in charge at Dannemarie. Laferrière, always ready to praise his comrades, tells me that he is possessed of much energy, good sense, and decision (rather in our American way, I found later) and the "territory" has flourished under him.

Pleasant lunch, enlivened by some last German salvos, which shook the windows and caused the glasses on the table to ring. Much and easy conversation—as we ate the classic Alsatian dish of sauerkraut, boiled potatoes, and pork, and the equally classic pancakes—mostly about the unrealizable and irreconcilable dreams of small and penniless nations, springing up like poor and unthrifty relations at the day of inheritance. And how amusing, even, the adjustments might become, once the blood-letting had ceased, though everybody felt more or less of a pricking in the thumbs at the thought of *l'après-guerre*. One could not then foresee that the movement of the Peace Conference would be about as rapid as that of the notoriously timeless glacier. Nor was it given to prophets to foretell the exceeding glitter of its generalities, nor how those same small nations, without a cent in their pockets, some even without pockets, like the Zulus and Hottentots, would multiply a hundredfold in its dewy shade. The metaphors are mixed, though not more so than the theme, and unfortunately it *won't* "be all the same in a hundred years," everything having been taken into account except the future.

After lunch we start out in the motor driven by the swift yet careful chauffeur, accompanied by a doctor *à deux galons*, who speaks English very well, but doesn't understand a word I say—and my English is generally intelligible, though perhaps one wouldn't

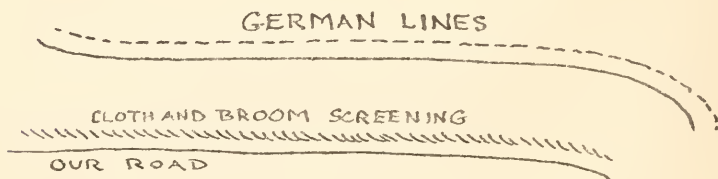
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know right away if I came from England or the United States.

We passed the high, broken, pink viaduct of the railway, looking, against the near Swiss hills, like a bit of aqueduct in the Roman Campagna, though without any beauty of light. It had been destroyed the first days of the war, rebuilt, again destroyed, and then abandoned.

We were running straight toward the trenches, through that green and gold and brown autumn world, the road screened by wire netting interwoven with pine branches and broom, and there were kilometers of cloth screening, too, torn and flapping. The lines are but a few yards distant, and everywhere between us and them are the brown lakes of barbed wire.

At St.-Léger an infantry band is playing the terrible, the gentle, the dolorous, the gorgeous, the human, the superhuman "*Sambre et Meuse*," which will forever evoke those seventeen hundred thousand sons of France who to its beat marched to their death. We stop to listen. A veteran of 1870 (no village seems to be complete without one or more) comes out, his green-and-yellow ribbon in his rusty buttonhole, and gives Lieutenant Ditandy a toothless, palsied salute. Black-clad women are grouped about the blue-clad band, under a great yellow chestnut tree. The mustard-tinted khaki and red *checchias* of a passing Moroccan regiment give a last deep accent to the color of the scene. And for a long way our road runs like this:





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We continue swiftly through villages shot to bits and deserted save for the troops, *Quatrième Zouaves mixtes*, they mostly are, quartered within their crumbling walls. There are tattered cloth screens for camouflage hung across the streets, as electioneering signs would be hung, or the banners of festivities and welcome. Open-mouthed, the soldiers see the auto pass where for two years no wheeled thing has rolled. If men went there they slipped silently behind the screens and under cover of night, with food and munitions or carrying wounded men.

As for me, I begin to feel like a cross between Joan of Arc and Madame Poincaré.

Lieutenant Ditandy points out "*le Bec de Canard*," the duck's bill, a long tongue of Swiss territory that juts in comfortingly between the French and German lines, and is greatly beloved by everybody.

On the outskirts of the battered village of Seppois we pause; a few more turns of the wheel and we would be in full sight of the German lines. I make good my woman's reputation for lack of sense of responsibility and beg to proceed. Lieutenant Ditandy, however, caps daring by a somewhat belated prudence (there is something bold and hard in his eye when it's turned toward the enemy), saying:

"We ought not to be here; as it is, our safe return depends on whether a German officer sees us and, seeing us, thinks he might as well turn the mitrailleuses on. The first man to be killed in the war was killed near here—it would be too stupid to be the last."

Laferrière: "Not to speak of the incident it would create, and if the colonel sees us—well, the prison at Seppois isn't inviting." So we turned toward the Swiss frontier instead, and I thought deeply, sweetly on her so dear, so near, as I looked toward these hills enfolding her, the best loved of my heart.

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Then we turned another way, passing again through Seppois. Arab troops are quartered there, and we were held up by the sentinel, who wanted to see our papers. He was dark of color, delicate of hand, straight of nose, and wore his military coat buttoned by one of its top buttons in such a way that it fell with an effect of burnous. He couldn't read French characters, so he called to another thin, small-handed, straight, coffee-colored man, who might have been his twin, who couldn't read them, either, and finally they both threw up their slender hands, resembling those of some antique bronze of an adolescent, after which we passed on. And I told Sérin's story of the Arab guard who held him up one dark night, in the trenches, but generously gave him *tire-lire, tu ne passes pas!*" ("You can't pass unless the countersign, saying to him, "*Si tu ne dis pas* you say *tire-lire!*")

They're cold, these Arabs, they're gray with cold, and they don't know why they fight, nor whom, but they follow their officer to the death, and, if he falls, lose heart under these gray skies with which Allah seems only remotely connected.

And then we turned back and went through young woods where countless thousands, no, millions of shells were piled on shelflike receptacles, as one would pile bottles of wine on cellar shelves. Everywhere were the words "*Route interdite,*" "*Défense de passer,*" and we passed, until we came to Faverois, with its old, old church on the top of a tiny hill, over which the town spilled. The broad, low steps of the church were made of ancient tomb slabs, and, stooping, I saw, on one of them, half obliterated, "*in pace,*" and "16—."

There was much that was unspoiled, or more likely forgotten, in the interior. A suave-expressed St.-Sebastian, with dimpled limbs, so evidently unfit for the arrows that transfixd them, and something yearning

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and earthly about his eyes, was above the Louis XV altar; quite unmistakably he was of the gay century. In another niche was an unknown saint, dressed like a personage of opera; three plumes were on his head and he wore a golden shirt of mail and high, fringed boots. At the side-altars were charming, very pure models of angels, and bow-knots and shells (I mean, for once, *sea*-shells). As we came out we noticed that the roof of the church was painted a silver-white and that of the old house nearby, with the round tower, was painted the same way, and other houses, too, and when we asked why they told us it shone like crystal at night and was to warn airplanes of their nearness to the Swiss frontier.

A blue group of *poilus* was standing on the crest of the street, looking at a newspaper. One cried out in a loud voice, "*Guillaume a—*," only one can't write the word. And going up we saw the news of the Kaiser's abdication in letters quite American in size.

Then in a very understandable zeal that I should miss nothing, the doctor *à deux galons*, espying a khaki figure, said, "There comes an American," and I saw approaching a blond, round-faced young man with spectacles. Something leaped within me as I turned to him. But he answered me in the stiffest German accent possible, "Ja, pig news"; and when I said, "Yes, we've won the war!" he answered, "Well, I do t'ink we god 'um shust now." Unreasonably, the thing that had leaped within me lay down. I said, "Good-by." He said, "So long." And so much for American meeting American on the hill of the village of Faverois.

Laferrière had marched all through this country, *sac-au-dos*, and in one place he buried a comrade, and in another he knew hunger and thirst, and in another he had watched the day break after a night battle. There is a history to Faverois, too, but I don't know it,

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and it's just as well, for I would be sure to tell it in this long vigil, and I *must* finish with the war.

Back to Dannemarie, the chauffeur driving like the wind, and Lieutenant Ditandy finds out where the American officers have their headquarters. There is a battalion<sup>1</sup> attached to the Seventh French Army. I am conducted over a muddy street, past two classic dung-heaps, the kind so evidently handed down from father to son, and go up some dark backstairs, and there Colonel Wing and Major Griffiths are rung up by an orderly. I give my name, and they all know of me. In a moment appear, young and slim and untried and eager, the colonel and the major, glad to see an American woman in Dannemarie. And then they took me to their more than simple quarters out through another door and another court, where there was the usual mud, but only the scent of a vanished dung-heap. How many good American dollars they had "planked down" for this priceless compound I know not. After a while we walked back to the motor waiting in the square, and I presented them to the French officers. One of them said he had been at Plattsburg with my husband that first historic summer, and spoke of General Wood, whose aide he had then been, saying, with a flush, "He is the greatest man in the United States, as well as the greatest general," and there in the square of Dannemarie I thought, "*Magna est veritas*," and then, "Too late, too late."

On our way home, not far out of the town, we come across a group of Americans and French colonials standing by the road. Lying on the embankment was a young man with a fractured skull, his face deathly pale, except for the contusions, already swollen and blue. His hair was matted with blood and his red *checchia* lay in the ditch. The stern young officer of the many decorations

<sup>1</sup> Battery B, 42d Artillery C. A. C.



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## THE VIGIL OF THE ARMISTICE

(there were three rows of them) that I had seen descending at the inn at Morzwiller, was there, on his beautiful mare, and he held the halter of another very good beast, the one that had just unhorsed his rider. We got out and the young man was placed carefully in our motor to be taken to the hospital at Dannemarie, after which we started to walk back to Masevaux—about thirty kilometers. In war-time you don't wonder "can you do it," you just start out; sometimes you get there alive, sometimes you don't. This turned out all right, for shortly after our motor, which had met an ambulance, came back for us.

And then we found ourselves passing through a sunset-world, cut by a bar of level light, so strangely thick where it touched the golden earth that it was almost like a ledge or a wall over which we looked into wind-still, purple forests, and above us, like the tarnished gilt ceiling of a temple, was the pale, amber sky. We talked somewhat of hope, somewhat of life, from which the red thing had so suddenly gone, as they alone can talk who have laid their heads close against the cruel, beautiful, full breast of war.

As we drove into the Place du Chapitre a delicate white moon, seen through the nearly bare lindens, was hanging in a deepening sky, close above the soft, dark roofs of the houses of the *chanoinesses*. There was no breath of wind. No cannon sounded. One's heart, too, I found, was very still. Millions of men waited face to face in dark lines, and that same moon touched their bayonets, their helmets, and their drinking-cups. The sun had set upon the last day of the World War. . . .

The maid who brings my breakfast as I lie half dead, but not asleep, after the burning, consuming night, opens my blinds.

French and American flags are flying from many windows. Something wets my eyes. Then—if in my flesh

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or out of it I know not—I see a strange brightness filling the Place du Chapitre, and a further glory bathes my being in such sweet and cooling waters that I again am strong to pass, with the Sons of Victory, into the New Day.

In the old house are sounds of feet running to and fro. From our windows also blue and white and red flags are being hung. In the street are heard, “*Ça y est,*” and “*L’armistice est signé.*”



## XVI

### DIES GLORIÆ

*"O Eastern Star! Peace, peace!"*

AND I arose and went to the church where there was a great ceremony, for it was the feast of St.-Martin, patron of Masevaux, as well as the end of the war. . . .

Afterward I stood outside on the wide rose-gray steps, under a sky of matchless silver-blue, among groups of villagers, soldiers, and officers. A blue infantry band, grouped under that blue vault against the pink church, played the "Marseillaise" and "*Sambre et Meuse*," with a great blare of trumpets, quickening the heart-beats, then "The Star-Spangled Banner," and many eyes were wet with tears of hope and loneliness.

Amid the throng I noticed some new silhouettes, always in groups. They were those of husky young men in civilian holiday garb; flat, black hats, short, black jackets coming only to the waist, long, tight, black trousers, pink vests, and high, white collars. These young men, who looked no one straight in the eye, were strange-souled ones who had burned with no fever of combat; the lamp of no cause had shone before their faces; they had known no country for whom 'twas sweet and fitting to die. Free not to serve in the French army, out of reach of the German authorities, they had passed from adolescence to manhood during the World War unspashed by blood. And they will be a generation

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apart. Even as they appeared on the day of victory in groups, apart. Later, in tribulation of maturity, in weakness of old age and fear of death, they may sigh that they were not among those who "dying are not dead," and would exchange the worn drapery of their couches for the "blue-black cloud." And those who have not known a hot youth will know a cold old age.

A motor was standing under the lindens of the Place du Chapitre and by it a black-bearded, giant chauffeur who might have been among the hosts of Louis le Débonnaire on the Field of Lies. I got in with Laferrière and he took me up on a hillside, and from the height showed me a last time the kingdoms and principalities into which his race had come. The plain shone in a blue and exceeding beauty; we ourselves were caught in a glistening web of air shot with color by the low-arching November sun. Marking the course of the great river was a line of mist shimmering in the same warm-tinted sun of Indian summer. "*L'été de St.-Martin*" indeed. Here and there villages shone brighter than day, and the hills were deep-colored, yet soft and unsubstantial. Victory, like a shining, soft-rolled ball whose tangles were hidden, was in our hands—or like to a crystal sphere as yet undarkened by events.

The grass of our hillside was dew-wet in the sun, white and frosty in the shade. Each fallen, rust-colored beech leaf, each scarlet cherry leaf, was set with something glittering. All, all was a-shine. Even the heart, too, after the dark years.

I cried within myself, though I might have said it aloud, "O beauty of life, why art thou so often hidden?" And I had in mind the eternal years, though the newborn hour of victory was so passing sweet upon the hillside.

And looking at the splendid river whose course was

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marked by the shining band of mist, I thought how deep the Lorelei was hidden in its timeless waters, though 'tis said she betrays but once those listening to her song. And long since, for the noise of battle, the hypnotic chanting of the Rhine-maidens lulling their nation to dreams of boundless might had not been heard. I thought, too, how the blood of the world's armies had put out the circle of fire about Brünnhilde, though whence it was first kindled it may be again rekindled; and for all our dead—and theirs—in the middle of Europe there are, I know not how many, tens of millions to whom the fire-music is their light and heat, the river the symbol of their strength; and what to do with it all? Walhalla has been destroyed in the greatest roar of sound mortal ears have ever heard, but that which wrought its pillars and its walls is still there, and in other wide-doored mansions Wotan's warriors may drink again deep cups of hydromel.

Siegfried lies dead upon his bier, but Brünnhilde's candle throws a light upon his face, and though Loge seems no longer at his post, it is believed he waits somewhere unseen, protecting, as best he may, the Walkyries' unquiet sleep, until they wake and ride again, crying, "*Je ho, je te ho!*" inciting to battle and to sacrifice.

And as nations always have the governments their mystical qualities create, in spite of the great defeat in the West and the solvent forces in the East, I thought, "Is anything really changed in Germany of that which makes each nation like only unto itself?" Old things may take new names, but, the blood-madness past, they will walk again the banks of their great river—listen once again to the Rhine-maidens, and Lorelei, combing her hair, will sing once more for them, while the wonder-working music that has so scorched us will draw again its circle. And the German people may be more portentous in defeat than when their armies were spilling over

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Europe—only, one who says this too soon will be stoned and one who thinks it not at all be deceived.

Then from some distant church tower softly sounded the first noontide of peace, and, turning, I left the Germanies to their predestined fate. "He beheld and melted the nations," and truly of them may be said "*Glück und Unglück wird Gesang.*"

For to each one his own, and the power of rhythmic sound over the world's will can no more be separated from that nation's destinies than can certain inborn qualities of the French be separated from theirs. That pervading sense of style, that illuminating, stimulating art, their conversation, that incomparable arrangement of words, their prose; or, in the mystical realm, that bright and singular thing they denominate "*la Gloire,*" which one of my countrywomen<sup>1</sup> has written of in golden words, and that other peculiar and essential translation into habit and custom of the word "*honneur,*" and many more deathless qualities that make France what she is and not something else. . . .

Then I found myself following Laferrière over another diamond-set path of rustling autumn leaves, and we got into the motor and went down the hill into the beflagged and crowded town, drawn so brightly, yet so transiently, out of its antique obscurity.

At the *popote* many guests were assembled, among them three men of the Anglo-Saxon race, come to eat in Masevaux the first-fruits of victory, and later, not so very much later, perhaps that very night, they were to tell of it to the world, each seeming to have, as it were, the end of a telegraph wire cuddled in his pocket by his stylographic pen.

Many, I knew not who they were, came in after lunch to salute the commandant, whose house and heart were wide open that day. Black-robed, tremulous women,

<sup>1</sup> Edith Wharton.

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youngish officers with very lined faces on which, over night-loss and night-grief, was written something at once soft and shining and eager; but, with all the coming and going, a strange new quiet pervaded everything. Noise had, for a time, gone from the border-world.

Afterward we were taken up to see the room once lived in by Anna, the wife, or rather widow, of the Oberforster. In it was the most extraordinary piece of furniture, designed to occupy two sides of a corner, that I have ever seen. It was a divan, a narrow, hard divan, at right angles with itself and upholstered in mauve rep. Above the narrow seat and reaching nearly to the ceiling was a series of mirrors set in woodwork like many panes of glass, the mirror parts too high to see oneself in. On the floor near it was a hard, tasseled cushion of old-gold satin on which I am sure no foot had ever rested, for it seemed rather to belong to the dread family of bric-à-brac. On the divan was a small, woolen-lace cushion bearing the words "*nur ein Viertelstündchen*" in shaded silks.

Voluptuous the divan was not, neither was it respectable, nor comfortable, nor practical, nor anything natural to a divan, but it doubtless represented some dim longing of the soul of her who bought and installed it, some formless inclination toward beauty, out of the daily round of the good housewife; perhaps even a "soul storm," after the Ibsen manner, had so externalized itself. Who knows, or ever will know, or cares?

The wide bed was of the newest and horriest of *art nouveau*, and over it was a spread of many pieces of coffee-colored machine-made lace put together with colored wools. There was a writing-table near the window at which you couldn't write, for all the writing space was taken up with little drawers or tiny jutting-

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out shelves, and an imitation bronze vase, holding some faded artificial roses, was built into it, where the hand would naturally slip along when writing. Over it, between the windows, hung an illuminated verse, "*Allein soll ich denn reisen? die Heimat ist so schön.*" From the Oberforster's album some one took and presented to me a photograph of Anna, which I couldn't connect with that room, a rather sharp-nosed, mild-eyed woman whose head was leaning against her husband's head. And the husband is one among millions of husbands who lie in their graves, for whom the pleasant habit of existence is no more.

Downstairs on their upright piano, in the corner of the dining-room, are those high piles of music of the masters, and much of it is arranged for four hands.

In the afternoon a great weariness came upon me, and the light of victory seemed to pale, but I knew that it was only within myself, because of the long vigil in which I had burned both oil and wick. I stood listening for a while to the military bands in the Halle aux Blés and the Place du Marché, but the gorgeous fanfare of the trumpets reached me only dully, as from a great distance.

Then many little boys, after the eternal manner of little boys, began to set off firecrackers, and the sudden noises hurt my ears.

I went to my room, but was too wearied to compose myself to rest, and soon came out, chilly and wandering. The sun had set upon the square and something cold had begun to come up from the earth; I seemed to have finished both joy and mourning. I thought that perhaps forever I would be alone, unable to partake of the world's gladness.

I could not remember, in that afternoon ebb of vitality, that with the evening hours would come rushing in the tide of nervous strength, bringing again warmth to

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my heart, light to my spirit, and that buoyantly I would be treading the *Via Triumphalis* of this borderland.

A little later in a blue twilight, bluer close to the earth where those many Sons of Victory pressed, I walked out with Laferrière past the ancient, evocative Ringelstein, along the Doller, and we called on a very charming woman who had also seen the war of 1870—Madame Caillaux. She gave us a perfect cup of tea and was flanked by no veteran, and she, the portion of whose youth and age had been war, was calm with the pleasant calm of those who harmoniously have sewed together the ends of life.

When we came out a pale white moon had arisen over some black cedars planted near the door, and as we walked slowly back, saluted by blue-clad men, or standing aside to let munition-wagons rattle by, Laferrière told me of some of the glorious deeds of his comrades of the *popote*, though no word of himself.

In the Place du Chapitre the populace was already gathered about the fountain of the stone flame. It was like looking at an old print, recording old victories and old rejoicings, together with the eternal hope of the people that new victories, unlike the old, may mean new things for them.

I felt through my single being the surge of the generations, and against my hand the beat of the changeless human heart, forever quickened or retarded by the same things. Loving, hating, desiring, forgetting, and finally relinquishing its beat, because it must. Though I remembered that in all times there are men who prefer something else to life. . . .

In the evening Madame Mény gave a great dinner for the officers of the Mission, to which I was also bidden. Madame Mény is the daughter of Madame Chagué and lives next door to her mother in an ancestral home with

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high, sloping roof and deep windows, giving on the Place du Marché, overlooking the fountain, which I can't see from my window. The officers wore all their decorations and even gloves, and I felt as a wren might feel among the birds of paradise, and I wished again that I had brought a good dress and something sparkling for my breast. When dinner was half through came Captain Bacquart from Paris, belated on that Belfort train, still at its old tricks. He was slightly condescending, as one might be coming from the City of Light to the dusky provinces, but everything he had to tell, even the things he had heard in the greatest solemnity from Ministers of State, had been grabbed by the Mission out of the air before he left Paris, and in addition everybody knew a lot of things he didn't know, that had happened while he was on the way. But we did smile at the story of the routing out of a station-master, whose trust was train-schedules and lost articles rather than events, to be asked whether he knew if the armistice had been signed, by the species every station-master hates even in peace-times—that is to say, travelers—and "*Saperlotte!*" and "*Nom de Dieu!*" rose to the station vault when he found that *that* was what they wanted him for!

After dinner there was music and for a last time I heard Lavallée sing of "*la douce Annette.*" Then another officer whom I had not seen before, Lieutenant Ruchez, sang in a veiled but flooding voice many of Schumann's songs. It began by the commandant asking for the "Two Grenadiers," and for a time the old wounds ceased to burn, even though we thought of those many whose prayer had been "Bury me in the earth of France." On that night of victory he sang, too, in his musician's voice, "*Du meine Seele, du mein Herz,*" and "*Ich grölle nicht wenn auch das Herz mir bricht,*" and nobody found it strange. They knew how for all time



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lovers will tremble at the words, "*Ewig verlor' nes Lieb,*" or in ecstasy cry out, "*Du meine Seele, du mein Herz,*" to the impulse of the immortal music.

Afterward we sang the "Marseillaise" with further and deeper thought of those hosts who to its sound had gone up to a death of glory.

Then M. Mény opened more champagne and each one drained a last time the red-gold hanap of victory.

And many, many shades haunt these borderlands, the clash of spear on armor mingling with the roar of 75's and 420's.

When we came out midnight was striking. The ancient square was dark and still where all the evening distorted forms had gesticulated in the flare of torches, crying of victory and, too, of freedom, the word I scarcely dare breathe, so strange and terrible may be its meaning. . . . Though what shall more deeply move us than the hope that the unborn inclination of our soul toward love in freedom shall find its being and its breath? . . .

The commandant and his staff accompanied me a last time across the starless, moonless square to my dwelling, where there was a close handclasping of friends in victory, for had I not been caught up in the apotheosis of the Mission? I felt for a moment, as I stood on the broad steps, like a figure in the background of some great allegorical painting.

For these men, as for me, the "moving finger having writ, was moving on." Soon they would go from the hillside to the plain they had so long looked down upon. And the scroll of their history there is tightly rolled, nor can any man say what is written on it.

But this they knew, and with a point of sadness, that their work of intimate companionship, of trust, of hope and dolor shared in the valleys of St.-Amarin, Masevaux, and Dannemarie was already in the past. And all endings are sad, even those of victory.

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The next morning, in a pale, chill, shifting fog, through which I had glimpses of *camions* full of shivering, velvet-bodied, black-bowed children *en route* for the Belfort train to Paris, and huddled veterans bound the same way, I passed forever from Masevaux, as a wind that goeth and returneth not.

THE END







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