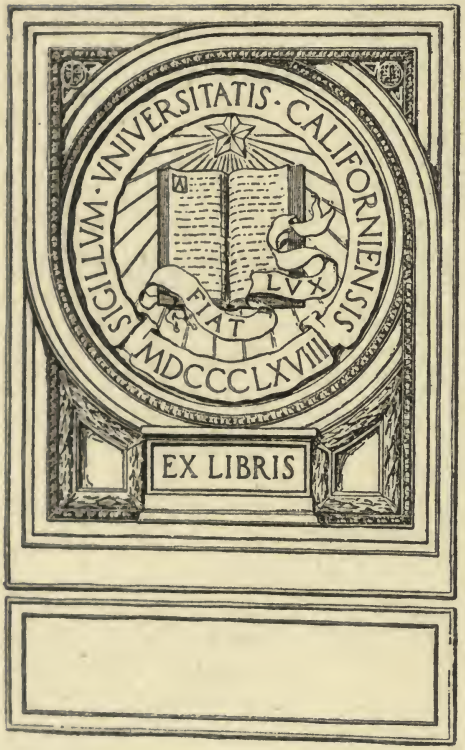
FACING THE HINDENBURG LINE

BURRIS A. JENKINS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FACING THE HINDENBURG LINE

Personal Observations at the Fronts and in the Camps of the British, French, Americans, and Italians, during the Campaigns of 1917

BY

BURRIS A. JENKINS

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"The Man in the Street," etc.

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To

My Son in Aviation

PREFACE

IN the double capacity of war correspondent and Y. M. C. A. lecturer, I had unusual opportunities of seeing the war, on all the fronts of western Europe, as it was in 1917. As a correspondent, I could go where, as a Y. M. C. A. man, I could not; and as a Y. M. C. A. worker my duty called me where as a newspaper man I could not have gone. The observations of most military men are confined to their own particular sector or sphere. My commission was a roving one.

I do not say these things to boast. No man can come into close contact with this world misfortune and, if he have any imagination or any soul, come away with egoism accentuated. When many of the choicest men of earth: artists, scholars, musicians, men of letters, are dying—common soldiers in trenches,—one can only feel the insignificance of self. I say these things, then, only to give confidence in the statements made, when, in these days, one cannot always be sure what to believe. I have written down what I saw and heard.

B. A. J.

Kansas City, Mo.

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I

DODGING THE SUBMARINE

THE Trans-Atlantic journey in submersible days differs from one in ordinary times mainly, though not entirely, in psychology. Your friends at the port of sailing—if you are unfortunate enough to have any—shake their heads and look at you commiseratingly as if you had double pneumonia or were in the last stages of typhoid, tuberculosis or insanity. They tell you how they advised So-and-so, who came all the way from Denver or Dodge City, that he ought to go back home and not sail; and he did so. Then all the way across the submarine keeps bobbing up from beneath the surface of—conversation and exploding either in shudders or in laughter.

There are, however, some concrete reminders that these are not the placid seas of peace. For example, your first glimpse of the slender liner reveals not the former beautiful contrast between black hull, red funnels and white upper works, but one dead level of

lead colored war paint. There is a small gun forward and a larger one aft. Notices are on the bulletin boards instructing you how to comport yourself "in case it becomes necessary to abandon ship"—delicate euphemism! Lifebelts are brazenly obtrusive; and the passenger list is cut up into groups and assigned to various lifeboats. A few days out to sea and there is a drill, in which each one arrays himself in his cork necklace and waterproof coat and scrambles up to the upper deck to assemble with his grotesque mates beside his boat, feeling uncommonly corpulent and sheepish.

There are eight or ten passengers equipped with new fangled rubber suits, filled under the arms and about the body with some substance lighter than cork, with compartments for food, water bottle, alarm whistle and all the conveniences of a solitary journey in the sea, except furnaces and propeller. An obese woman of fifty in one of these looks like a huge bifurcated tadpole, and walks, with her leaden soles, like a thousand of brick. There is merriment at her expense, but she looks desperately determined and superior. She has paid between sixty and one hundred dollars for her marine costume, and all that she hath will she give in exchange for her

life. What a pity if she does not get an opportunity to use her bathing suit! There is only one defect about these elaborate contrivances, and that is that the driving spray on the crests of the waves is what drowns one, after all. The rest of us, in envy, perhaps, look upon the chosen ten and mutter the Calvinistic sentiment: "A man who is born to be hanged is not going to be drowned."

Strangely enough the most real source of danger is ignored by all the passengers, however sensible of it are the captain and his crew, and that is the running through the nights without "riding lights." Twenty knots an hour we go plunging forward into the blackness, when any moment we may crash into some other craft, of which there are thousands on the seas. The ocean is not so big a place after all. Fancy driving a motor car along a country road at like speed without headlights! To be sure the cases are not parallel, although fairly so. It is strange that there are not more collisions, but old sailors predict that there will be. I have heard of only one, when two transports in the Mediterranean came together. We pass other ships daily, sometimes several in a day, but at night not a glim is shown either by us or by our neighbors. Our windows and ports

are covered with sheetiron screens. The last two or three nights we are forbidden to light cigars or cigarettes on deck. At all times the showing of an electric flashlight is *"defendu."* One evening I stepped out into the Stygian darkness on the promenade deck and stood gazing or trying to gaze into the blackness, when bump! I thought a submarine had hit me on the chin! *"Pardon, Monsieur!"* and I could tell by the clatter of the wooden shoes upon the deck that a sailor had unconsciously assaulted me.

Many of the nights some passengers, life preservers on them or beside them, spent the livelong night in their steamer chairs upon the deck. They usually declared that they desired the fresh air—the rooms are so stuffy, don't you know. After all, most sane people refuse to forego pajamas and the delightful early morning salt bath, and cold shower, as in peace times. A few of us realized that we had ahead of us a shorter channel voyage more dangerous than the Atlantic; and the wise ambulance drivers on board knew that at times a single mile at the French front would prove far more hazardous from shells than the whole ten days at sea from submarines. Nevertheless, there was a sigh of relief from the whole two hundred and thirty-seven of us when we had made the harbor

mouth and the police and customs officials came aboard. These functionaries never appeared so welcome before.

There was a pair of French private soldiers in the second cabin, one of them young and smooth faced, like an American, the bronze cross of war upon his breast. These men came swinging aboard, in their tourquoise-blue uniforms, their kits on their shoulders, crying farewells, shouting Vivas and all but singing La Marseillaise. They had been *"blesses,"* wounded reservists, and were American citizens.

There was a young woman, a trained nurse, one would guess, gay, apparently thoughtless, always promenading. Guess again, and you will miss it again. She is at the head of one of the largest international relief agencies, and is admitted to every front.

There was a professor in the Harvard Medical Faculty. He is engaged in an experiment of incalculable value. He seeks to overcome shock, whatever that is. He nor any other surgeon will define it. He must get to a man within a few minutes after the soldier is hit; so he must sit in the front trenches under shell fire, waiting his opportunities. Like all other occupants of these trenches, he declares that the monotony is the deadly thing. His method is extremely simple when he explains it. It is

a wonder nobody ever thought of it before; but that is to be said of all great inventions and discoveries.

There was the impressario of the greatest grand opera company in America. There was the French art dealer, who has sold some of the world's greatest treasures to American millionaires. There was the Italian consul general to a great city in Canada, who had been called home to take his place in the war office, who uttered to me this well put maxim: "Egotism in a man is bad; in a nation, it is necessary." There was the French manufacturer of automobiles and airplanes, who had been to America purchasing supplies. He and his pretty little wife were inseparable companions and evidently had been deeply in love with each other these twenty years.

There was a big husky western American surgeon on his way as a pioneer to study hospital administration at the front, against the arrival of American troops. There were several young ambulance men, in their uniforms of the American Red Cross, in France, with the little fore-and-aft fatigue caps worn alike by Tommies and *poilus*.

To me, however, the most striking figure on board was the young American in the Red Cross uniform, with the *Medaille Militaire* and the *Croix de Guerre* both upon his breast

and the two red scars upon his forehead and the hole in his cheek. Handsome? Of course he is handsome, with patrician face, clear, brown eye, high color and little mustache and the lithe figure of an Indian. Ten months at the front; then one day a shell; given up to die, or worse; his father summoned across the sea by a cable which stated that his son, if he survived at all, must be paralytic, or totally blind, or insane; but home for six months and back now to have certain pieces of steel taken out of forehead and face bones; then, if he survives, into the aviation corps, where the first plane he destroys will bring him, he thinks, the *Légion d'Honneur*. Let him tell the story in his own words, as he told it so modestly to me:

"It was about eight miles northwest of Verdun, last September. The Bosches knew of our motor lorries bringing supplies into the village and kept their guns trained on a certain corner. When they heard a motor coming they dropped a shell at that corner. They heard our ambulance and dropped one on us. It was a hundred to one shot and we got the hundredth. Kelly was killed. I did not lose consciousness, but was blinded and deafened. One eardrum is gone. See, I can stop this side of my nose and blow out of my ear. I was afraid to shout, as the Germans weren't

three hundred yards away. I called Kelly, but he did not reply. Then I set out to crawl. I bumped into barbed wire and struck my shoulder, drew back and bumped again. At last I yelled and they turned a machine gun on me, but I lay flat and yelled some more. Then two Frenchmen from the *poste de secours* came out and got me. That's all."

They sighted a floating mine one day from the bridge, when we were nearing land. The usual method is to fire upon any strange cask, and, if it is a mine, explode it; but this mine was seen so early in the morning that our gallant French captain refused to disturb his passengers with a shot. When I told this afterwards to an English sergeant, he merely remarked: "Well, I'll be damned!" Our captain, however, sent his pilot-boat back to shoot the mine.

Our return across the Atlantic, from a port in England, was singularly fortunate. An American rear-admiral and his staff were upon our ship, returning from a mission abroad. Five destroyers, therefore, accompanied us the first three hundred and fifty miles; then three dropped back, and two remained with us until we were seven hundred and fifty miles out and quite beyond the danger line.

II

THE FOLKESTONE AIR-RAID

WHEN I rushed out of our house by the seaside I found crowds gazing upward in the direction of the sun. I could see nothing for the glare, neither apparently could others.

Suddenly two little girls cried: "There they are!" Then I saw them, two airplanes, not Zeppelins, emerging from the disc of the sun almost overhead. Then four more, or five, in a line; and others, all like bright silver insects hovering against the blue of the sky. The heavens seemed full of them. There were about a score in all and we were charmed with the beauty of the sight. I am sure few of us thought seriously of danger.

Then the air was split by the whistle and rush of the first bomb, which sounded like the shrill siren of a car. This was followed at once by a detonation that shook the earth. I heard nobody shriek, weep, or cry aloud. The people were marvelously controlled.

I glanced in the direction of the shell-burst,

100 yards away, and the débris was still going up like a column of smoke. Then came two more strokes, apparently in the same spot. Then three other bombs fell. I afterwards found the missiles wrecked the Osmond hotel and wounded our motor driver.

Then another bomb demolished the manor house by the sea. Two others fell in the water behind me and the gravel and mud and water spouted up in a geyser to the top of the cliffs where I stood. Later I learned that one of these shots tore off the legs of a little boy playing with his sister. The mother lay in a faint and the little sister, driven mad, rushed blindly into the water. She was rescued by a wounded soldier.

Other shots fell, but I could count no further. They came thick and fast, like crackling, rolling blasts of our western lightning and thunder. Nobody has reported the number of shells so far as I know. There were 200 or more casualties, nearly 100 of them fatalities. Anti-craft shells were now bursting on the fringes of the air fleet. Then followed in the distance the purr of the machine guns and we knew that our own planes were up in pursuit. We were later informed that three of the hostile fleet were brought down in the channel.

Most people took to the cellars. Had I known there was a cellar handy, or that it is considered good form in the circumstances, I should have followed, for soon I found myself alone on the leas overlooking the sea, where I had gone at the first cry of "Zepps."

It was our first time under fire and reminded me of a Missouri cyclone. The only drawback to this comparison is that the sun was shining in a clear blue sky over a placid sea.

As the bombs were crashing around us and houses were caving in, before I knew it I was humming a long-forgotten tune, doubtless sub-consciously associated with those old days. Two other men in our party independently testified that they also began singing softly.

Perhaps this tendency to sing or whistle is a manifestation of nerves and explains why troops always do so when we see them embarking for France; they know that next day they will be in the trenches—maybe over the parapet. At all events we confessed to nerves and fear.

When I reached the spot where the first three bombs had fallen, glass strewed the street for a block. In the middle of the macadam road was a shell hole six or eight feet across and three deep. Here lay two men in uniform, who looked to me to be dead;

there was a civilian, white-haired, who I knew had been killed.

Yonder was a little girl, half her face gone, yonder a young woman, both feet gone. Our young lieutenant, a Y. M. C. A. man from Canada, our host of those days, himself wearing the gold stripe on his arm, which betokens a wound, and no longer fit for service in the field, was bending over the wounded. I heard one of the stricken soldiers moaning, now, "Mother, O, mother!" Yonder lay two little babies already covered with sacking.

We rushed into a nearby basement, where they said was a wounded woman. Her hip was gashed. A Red Cross nurse appeared from nowhere. They were carrying an old lady, shaking with palsy, from a shell of a house. She was 80 years old, if a day. She had on bonnet and gloves. How she managed thus to array herself for departure from her home or to live at all in her demolished house is beyond me.

Down the slope of the lower and busier section of the town a narrow street crowded with afternoon shoppers was strewn with scores of dead, mostly girls and women. The old shoemaker who had been in his little shop was never found. Legs and arms and heads, detached, were scattered about. The draper's

shop was a mass of brick and stone and every girl in it was dead.

The remarkable thing was that I heard no shrieking and saw no weeping nor wringing of hands. All faces were white; teeth were clenched, lips compressed, women clutched at their garments or spasmodically smote their breasts. But not a moan nor a loud word escaped any lip in my hearing. The English are a marvelous people.

The young lieutenant in the Y. M. C. A. service already referred to, was formerly in the Princess Patricia's regiment. Of that gallant unit not more than a half dozen or so are in active service. Our lieutenant had not sufficiently recovered from wounds to take the field. On this day at Folkestone his hands were bloody to the wrists from his activity in first aid to the wounded.

Our little driver, Frank, was due to come for us at six-thirty, detailed by the Army Service Corps, to drive us out for a meeting at Otterpool. The raid took place at six and lasted until six-ten. When the time for us to start came, and no Frank appeared, I began to look about for a car; since, raid or no raid, the boys at Otterpool would be expecting us, and ought not to be disappointed. Of

course all cars were busy with the dead and wounded.

At last, at six-forty-five, here came Frank, his head bandaged, and no cap on. He had driven his car out of the garage at six o'clock, and stood beside the Osmond hotel. One bomb wrecked the hotel; another fell in the street thirty yards in front of him; another, a like distance behind him. Débris or a bit of a bomb laid open his head. They took him into the hospital, and the surgeon sewed him up and said:

"Now, Frank, you lie there," indicating a cot.

"But," objected Frank, "I've got to drive those Americans out to Otterpool!"

"Frank, lie there!" repeated the surgeon. "You're in hospital."

When the surgeon's back was turned, little Frank, nineteen or twenty, slipped out at a side door and appeared at our pension only fifteen minutes late and his hand as steady as mine now as I write. He drove us thirty miles an hour in his little "Tin Lizzie," upon which the bits of brick and mortar were still lying, out to Otterpool. We made him lie down during our meeting, then he drove us home again with the greatest steadiness.

III

TOMMY ATKINS IN AN AUDIENCE

"COME on, boys, let's have a sing-song! What shall it be?"

"Arizona! Tennessee! At my home in Kentucky! Pack up your troubles in your old kit bag!" There are a score of different suggestions. Then Jack selects what he pleases; he meant to, all along, anyway. He sits down to the piano; he is the only song leader in the Y. M. C. A. who doesn't look around for an accompanist; then he shouts:

"Come on! Let's go!" That's all that is necessary. The Tommies do the rest. The dust comes down off the rafters.

After a half hour of uproarious choruses, varied by solos from Jack, and one or two hymns or home songs, to lead up to the spoken word, Jack turns the meeting over to me. By this time the hut is jammed, men are standing crowded all around the windows. Sometimes they sit all over the platform and on the floor in the aisles.

Now when a speaker has a slippery audience like this delivered into his hand, it is like manipulating an eel. Fancy giving out a text and saying: "Now, brethren——" One might deliver a moving sermon; it would move Tommy out of the door. No, no, all our American men have made a conscientious study of their opening sentences; for they know that with Tommies the whole thing is won or lost in the first two minutes. Hold that audience for five minutes in any way, by hook or crook, and you can swing into a moral or religious drive and make it as strong as you like; you couldn't shoo your audience away. They'll stay with you, glued to the benches, for an hour.

One of our men begins:

"If there's a man here homesicker than I am, he'd better beat it! I want to see my little kid at home!" Tommy yells with laughter and sympathy.

Another throws out this, like a shot from a 6-inch gun:

"Up till the other day you and I were cousins; now we are brothers-in-the-blood!"

For myself, I have evolved out of old borrowed witticisms something like this:

"Tell me, men, honor bright and on the square, if we hadn't been introduced as

Americans you wouldn't have known it, would you?"

Groans, yells, catcalls and "Oh, no! Sure! G'wan!"

Then I add:

"A fellow said to me the other day: 'You can always tell an American, but you can't tell him much!' "

More groans, and an inquiring frame of mind. They don't know whether this is proverbial American boasting or not. Then: "I have heard, too, that the difference between an Englishman and an American is about this: An Englishman walks into a house as if he owned the whole damn place. An American walks in as if he didn't give a damn who owned the place."

We are now getting on. Tommy feels sure there is no firstly, secondly and thirdly coming along. I usually consult the secretary or the chaplain before introducing this unexpurgated, old thread-bare comparison which, I believe, was first made between a Harvard man and a Yale man; but I find it usually unnecessary to consult long at a time.

"Anyway, I hope that some day Englishman and American may walk, each in his own way, into certain houses in Potsdam and Berlin——"

And the trick is done. I now have Tommy by the ear; and better audience one need not desire on this earth, more appreciative, sensitive, quick to any appeal of humor, emotion, moral motive or spiritual idealism. You can talk about this war driving the people who are in it to atheism; it does, a few, but the vast majority are driven to their knees. The huts do not gather in simply the religious; they gather in, with their tea and cakes, old scarred veterans and soft-cheeked lads indiscriminately, all sorts and conditions, excellent cross-sections they are, of the entire British army.

In the first five minutes I generally drag in a reference to "Teddy" Roosevelt. It always takes fire. One night a man arose in the middle of the house and tossed a bronze cap-badge upon the platform at my feet. I have it before me now. It is the colonel's face surround with the words, "First Illinois, Chicago Rough Riders." I meet scores and scores of Americans, mostly in the Canadian battalions, but some in the other Imperials.

Then shortly I refer to President Woodrow Wilson and there is a hearty, generous round of applause. The average Englishman now looks upon our President as a very wise, careful, conservative man. An officer told me the

past week that Lloyd George had said to him sometime ago that America ought not to have come in any sooner than she did; she was of more use as a neutral than as a belligerent until just now.

Viewed from outside, a Red Triangle hut in the British camps presents very much the appearance of a ranch house on our western plains. It is long, low, rectangular; built of rough boards and stained brown. There is a counter at one end where are sold cigarettes, chocolate, coffee, stamps and the various necessities and luxuries of Tommy Atkins' life. There are tables where tea, coffee, malted milk and soft bottled drinks are dispensed, together with biscuits and cakes. In some huts there are billiard tables; in all, checkers, chess and dominoes. At the other end of the room is a stage, with piano and an auditorium.

In the late afternoon, when drill is done, and the Tommies are tired, hungry and thirsty, the huts fairly swarm, like bee hives; and business is brisk. Your Englishman prizes his tea beyond measure; and the United Kingdom consumes more sugar than any other nation in the world. One day a Canadian Y. M. C. A. secretary was decorated by King George in Hyde Park with the Military Cross because, at Vimy Ridge, he kept up with

the advancing line, and served chocolate and biscuits to the men, under shell fire.

The Canadian secretaries who first came out were commissioned as captains, later ones as lieutenants, and are under military orders; but as the authorities are distinctly favorable to the organization, these officers have wide discretion. The English secretaries are civilians, independent of military discipline, for the most part are dressed in "civies," and consider that they have an advantage in not being officers. The Canadians, too, prefer their own regime. In general, the Canadian huts are better manned and managed, and, so far as one can see, their secretaries get as close to the men as do the civilian secretaries among the English troops. Still it may be added, all Canadian officers are much more democratic with their men than are the English.

The huts furnish tons and tons of writing paper, free, to the men; and, as a consequence, the tables are full, in off hours, of busy writers. The Y. M. C. A. makes money in some of its canteens and loses in others; but, on the whole, does not pay expenses. Private subscriptions make up the deficit. Canadian secretaries are paid as officers; English are practically unpaid.

Certain Canadian officers are authority for

the story that the other day all the officers in a certain command having fallen, the Y. M. secretary took charge, led the men, and was killed; he was blown to bits; he was not even found. The English secretaries are undersized, or over thin, or crippled, or too old for service. Some men, fairly fit, have been taken from the huts and hurried to the trenches. I met a little thin rector in a hut at Aldershot one day who has asked for and received an appointment in France to go right into the dugout huts in the trenches. He starts next week.

One of our favorite song leaders in the huts is a Canadian, Captain Pequegnot, familiarly known everywhere here as "Captain Peg," who was gassed in the very first gas attack in France. He has never entirely recovered, as the puffed look about the eyes indicates; but his singing voice is unimpaired, also his jovial smile, that made him once a successful commercial traveler all over the American continent. He understands all the Tommies, and they, him; he can make them roar like bulls of Bashan and render them wild with joy, like March hares, whatever they are. He "carries on" for half an hour before introducing a speaker. "Carry on" is a favor-

ite word here for "perform," and is constantly in use.

My own steady sidepartner—for we usually travel in pairs, a singer and a speaker—is young Jack Barker, who hails from Girard, Kas., and who has been the last five years in Chicago. He has just been graduated from Northwestern, president of his class, leader of the glee club, an athlete of great success, runs a hundred yards in ten seconds flat, has a barytone that gives him a steady job in a Chicago quartet choir, and a smile that draws young men to him like submarines to a net—blindly. He can play and sing more kinds of ragtime than even an Englishman ever dreamed of.

We go into a hut at about 7 p.m., usually; Jack goes to the piano on the platform, beats out a storm of pseudo-negro melody that sets shoulders to wriggling, feet to shuffling, eyes to dancing; and when he finishes with a bang like a bomb from a German aircraft, the Tommies yell. Then Jack just looks at them and grins, and they yell some more.

At the close of our meetings we sometimes give the men a chance to sign pledge cards of religious confession and allegiance—a card indorsed by the archbishop of Canterbury as well as by Free Church leaders. Any man

may conscientiously sign it, no matter what his Christian denomination or predilection; and from thirty to a hundred and thirty usually sign every night. Some ask us to write and tell their wives or families what they have done.

The other night a Kansas City lad, in a Canadian battalion, whose parents did not know where he was, promised to write next day to his mother, while I wrote to his father.

Then, the last thing of all, comes the hand-shaking—Tommy loves to shake hands and Jack usually announces after we sing "The King," which closes every public meeting in the British army, that we shall be glad to shake hands with every man in the room. "Please come down this side and go out that side." And they come! It was hard on our muscles at first, but now we're used to it, for Tommy shakes hands as if he meant it. Then it's: "Thank you, Jack," "Glad you came, captain," "Come again," "God bless you."

And we answer as they file by: "Thanks, old man," "Mighty glad to be here," "God keep you, my lad," "Good luck to you all the way," and so on.

Sometimes one pauses and asks a question or presents a problem; then it is a word of quick answer and a hasty "God take care of

you"; for they know and we know they have need enough of God's care; to-morrow they may be in the trenches; the day after, over the parapet; maybe over the dark river.

Then Jack stands by the piano and they gather round him like flies on a sugar lump; and I take a chair on the auditorium floor, and there are several files deep all around me, their faces pressed almost against my own, eager eyes straining and tongues going. Questions and comments come quick and fast. The American navy, the submarines, the air craft, the merits and possibilities of cavalry, and the old, old question, "How long do you think it will last, captain?" pour forth in a torrent.

"Yes, sir, this wound came from 'La Bassee.'" "I got mine at Vimy Ridge." "Yes, sir, wounded twice, and back to France next week." "How can I get a transfer to the American army?" "I got mine in the thigh. I can walk three miles as good as any man, but not thirty. I'm done. But I could teach bayonet work and bomb throwin', sir."

Sometimes your throat is full and choked.

IV

THE BRITISH FRONT IN FRANCE

I HAVE pretty well traveled Northern France and the British front from the sea to the Somme. For about eighty miles of that one hundred and twenty, I have been close up to the front lines and have seen the activities there. All those battlefields so famous, embraced within that eighty miles I have explored. I have driven over registered roads, that is, roads that the Germans keep carefully mapped and can shell at any place or time. I have picked up pathetic relics upon three of the greatest battlefields of the world, still fresh with the awful scars of conflict—Messines, Vimy Ridge and the Somme. I have been in the most advanced line of the British and have looked over the top and down on the Hindenburg line. I have listened to the shrilling of our own shells over my head, felt the trembling of the earth when our great guns spoke and watched the black bursts of the Boche high explosives on either side of me within our own lines.

This is written in the lovely old château of

Count de ———, rented to the British government for the war. The count has his room reserved, which he occupies occasionally. We drove up a beautiful avenue of elms, four rows of them, shading the driveway in and out. Four British Tommies serving as butlers met us at the doorway and took our luggage to our rooms. Mine overlooks the driveway, and the large court in front of the château, where motor-lorries now are being unloaded with fresh gravel for court and drives. I find hot water provided in my private lavatory in a little pewter jug; a huge tub, ready for my morning bath; an electric reading lamp and a candle on the stand beside my Napoleon bed; and I am writing upon a beautiful walnut table of the time of Louis XVI. Is this war? I can listen and hear the guns.

There are four of us entertained at this chateau, an English member of the diplomatic service, an Italian literary man, and a widely known English novelist. There are other visitors as well; but these constitute our particular contingent.

It was fairly lively along the line, but on the whole not what it can be when it is desired.

We saw the desolate villages; a beautiful

city—Arras—that once held some forty thousand people, now a vast wilderness of ruined cathedral, town hall and station, with street after street that looked worse than the wake of a western cyclone. In these streets are still the trenches facing each other. They run across the *Grand Place,* into and through houses and railway station. There are masses of tangled and broken barbed wire and blasted trench; adjacent are miles and miles of battlefields that were once smiling farms and are now the floors of craters.

Yet of all this destruction, even the noble cathedral, like a broken widow, disheveled and mourning, held nothing like the fascination for us that yonder line of living flashes, bursting shells and upheaved earth possessed. English observation balloons were strung out for miles along the line. We stood under one as it went up; and from that spot counted nine in the air. German planes came over us as we stood there; and soon from their signals, no doubt, the Boche batteries opened upon us. You should have seen our captain hustle us into our motor-car and hurry us away, while the sound of our own "big stuff" rumbled over our heads, replying to the German.

Finally a German sausage balloon appeared. It was while we were at luncheon on the grassy

bank beside the road. We all gazed at the balloon through our glasses. Then we glanced away, and in ten seconds, someone cried: "There, it's gone!"

It was true. There was nothing left but a puff of smoke, slowly enlarging in the air. One of our planes had brought it down.

Look, there are three German planes, very high, directly over our heads. Our anti-aircraft guns opened almost as rapidly as machine guns; and little dots of white shrapnel smoke encircled the silver insects in the sky. They turned tail and sailed away home, with two of our machines mounting rapidly toward them. Then followed the rattle of the machine guns from the sky overhead; and so the aerial duels kept up all the day. There is no doubt the cavalry of the future is the cavalry of the air; and that the most useful contribution our nation can make to the cause of our allies is thousands of planes and tens of thousands of airmen to drive them.

We ate our lunches on the east side of a road over a commanding ridge; and as we lay there on the grass we saw the results of the scouting done by those three planes. The German guns, which had been strafing a village on an opposite ridge, turned their aim nearer, on a green spot on the slope. Shell

after shell was planted in a space that seemed to us not over a hundred yards in diameter.

"They must be searching for an ammunition dump," said the captain. "Those three Hun planes must have observed it."

That luncheon on the ridge was the most interesting one I ever ate. That is to say, the entertainment provided for eyes and ears, was beyond all shows ever spread before absorbed humanity. No doubt other men have eaten with perhaps vaster scenes before them, but I never had. There was the wide French valley, most of which had been fought over, inch by inch, already covering its yellow clay nakedness with verdure, with poppies and dog daisies; there were our convoys in approaching roads, troops marching, Red Cross wagons moving, horses and mules and motor lorries by the hundreds, all doing something to contribute to the show. There were our own big guns betraying their location to our eyes by occasional flashes and the whistle and rush of the "big stuff" going like chain lightning over our heads; and there was, most picturesque of all, the beautiful battle in the air.

Half way through luncheon our captain told us we were really violating the law, being without helmet and gas mask. We had left ours in the car standing in the cut in the road

behind us. We all smiled, however, and went on with our luncheon; knowing how careful British officers are of the safety of their visitors, and knowing if the danger were imminent he would insist upon every precaution. Two days later, we never got out of touch with our helmets and gas masks, but wore them almost the entire day. We kept our heads down, too, when told that we should; for only a week ago a French correspondent was killed about where we stood. A German sniper picked him off.

What fascinated me, almost as much as the air battles, was a dawning appreciation of the subterranean fights, the deadly game of hide-and-seek all the time going on. Of course, I had read of the mining and counter mining; and heard of the mine craters; but one can form no conception of these things until he walks the underground galleries and stands beside and in such a yawning punch bowl as that of Messines. It is impossible to put the picture in words. It was not these things, however, that overwhelmed me with a sense of the battle of the cave men; but it was when, with a candle in hand, thirty feet under ground, damp dripping all over me, and my feet covered with the white chalk mud, I met face to face and talked for half an hour with

a sergeant major who had lived and dug and fought for more than a year in the veins of the earth under Messines.

He was a Durham miner, and he was "some man." All the time, he knew, and all his comrades knew, that German miners were digging towards him, above him, beneath him. Each side knew the others' activities, and were springing mines, closing each others' galleries, blocking one anothers' parties off from air and food. It takes brains and ingenuity as well as daring and science to win underground. The Teuton is not lacking in theory, system, science and a certain practical precision; but when it comes to intellectual self-reliance and inventiveness, he goes down before the Anglo-Saxon, or else, as at Messines, he goes up.

In a dugout in these same galleries, I came upon a group of ten or a dozen Tommies, standing up munching their *déjeuner*. One of them stuck out his hand to me in the semi-darkness, saying:

"Hi, there, America, I'm from Ohio. I knew as soon as I saw the gold cord on that field hat you were from the States. I was in the Fourth Ohio at the Mexican border. This is an American bunch in here, five or six of us are Americans. Let me see, here's one, here's another."

That lad was surely loquacious; a little touch of home made him feel the whole world kin. That was not a Canadian battalion, either. Next day, the man highest up on Vimy, and nearest the enemy, said, as soon as he saw me: "I'm from Frisco." He was in a Canadian unit; for, of course, the Canadians have earned the right to Vimy Ridge.

One more little incident. It was late afternoon, and we had paused for tea in a shattered town. We had been there earlier in the day and saw very few soldiers; now there seemed thousands in the streets. They had been in the cellars sleeping during the day. Falling in with the stream of them now, we soon arrived at the Ace of Spades theater. A section of the army has improvised this theater and puts on its own performances; and very creditable they are, too.

I stood at the rear, jammed into the big old hall of a half crumbled stone structure, with fifteen hundred Tommies from all quarters of the earth, and watched a blond young beauty, handsomely begowned, with plenty of silk stocking and plenty of daring eyeflashes, sing, dance and flirt with three harlequins on the stage, and three rows of officers in the front. A most careful inspection could find no flaw

in the figure except, perhaps, the rather liberal dimension of feet and hands.

Here, I decided quickly, was an excellent place to get rid of the large importation of Virginia cigarettes, which the generosity of certain friends at home had made it possible for me to bring over from London. Here at the front tobacco is hard to come by, especially American tobacco, dear to the heart of the British army. And nobody in England or her army smokes cigars, except an occasional duke or earl or wandering American nabob like myself. Comparatively few smoke pipes. Everybody smokes cigarettes, including padres and Y. M. C. A. secretaries. Nobody drinks, even in officers' messes, so far as my observation has thus far gone, half so deeply as the average American clubman. The king's example seems to count. Crossing the Channel, in the restaurant on the boat, where nearly every English gentleman a few years ago would have had his scotch and soda, I heard, the other day, officer after officer call for soft drinks. Whisky was the rare exception.

Well, anyway, in the Ace of Spades theater, the cigarettes were turned over to the corporal in charge of the show; and one of the harlequins, at the end of a song, came out smoking one, and, announcing that here were the com-

pliments of friends in America, began tossing out the boxes. Such a yelling, howling, happy bunch of Tommies I never saw together before. That same afternoon, on a road leading up to the trenches, we stopped a line of hot, grim-faced men, bearing each his sixty pounds of kit on his back, and gave a package to each man. It was a study to see their faces light up. We paused, too, at a dressing station, where wounded had been brought in the last night from one of those little raids which are of such regular occurrence nowadays on our side of the line; and, passing among the stretchers a package and a greeting from friends across the sea, went to each man. All who could smile did smile.

V

GREAT BRITAIN JUST BEGINNING TO FIGHT

IF I were asked what is the mood which, more than any other, marked the British army at the front and the British nation back of it, at this time, I should reply, "Confidence." From all I can hear, this could not have been said four or five months previous to the summer of 1917. Then there was profound uneasiness lest the submarine should starve the island kingdom, lest the mighty ring of steel about the central empires should fly into a hundred shattered bits and the face of the world be changed. Why has confidence succeeded this apprehension? The answer I get on all sides is: "America has come in!"

From what I learned at the front, if any still cherish the fond hope that a great gap will one day be made in the Hindenburg line, and the sides of that gap rolled up upon themselves in a swift turning movement of cavalry, as in the old warfare, let him reconsider it at once. You need only to glimpse the modern

enginery of war; walk over, or rather clamber, slip, slide and jump over the field across which it has rolled, to become instantly aware of how utterly impossible it is that light troops should here ever again, with flying banners, dash after a routed foe. War is no longer a "blue racer" that speeds over ground; it is a huge caterpillar that crawls, a measuring worm that humps itself up and inches painfully and slowly along. War has always gone forward on its belly, and now its numbers have become so huge, its necessary equipment so multitudinous, that to supply its wants a whole industrial system must accompany it forward. Railways, telegraphs, depots, shops, stores, buildings, offices, all must crawl forward with it, and that, too, over volcanic surfaces that must be remade and rendered traversable.

To be sure, I met officers in a machine gun school who are experimenting and expecting "a more liquid state of warfare"; but I thought I could see that they were not sanguine of such a consummation in the very near future. No symptoms of liquefaction are discernible at present; gelatinous is the adjective that best characterizes the existing state; mud, putty-like, tenacious mud, unromantic, sordid, ugly mud—that conveys the impression of the whole glorious field of war to any man who

has seen it or had a hand in it. No, it is only by pushing the heavy motor truck of war forward through the mud, inch by inch, that the English hope to win; and they know that we Americans have got to get our backs, and hands, and feet, and faces into the mud with them and push and bite and sweat and bleed, in order that civilization may be saved.

There are still a few left of the old type of cavalry officers who feel that some day their horsemen will come into use on the western front. But for the most part these horsemen are grooming their mounts and kicking their spurs and going on parade many miles behind the big guns; and the officers close up in the line smile as they allude to an occasional press dispatch which tells how a hole was made and the cavalry came dashing up. Besides, little triangular bits of steel, so made with three spines that one of them always points up, can be strewn by the handful across any road; and a few strands of barbed wire—omnipresent in this war—will play havoc with any troop of horse that dared to dash anywhere. Very circumspect and gingerly must be the advance of horsemen over these fields.

"But," you say, "is the German not confident, too, these days?"

If so, his confidence is not founded on facts,

but upon government dictated reports. The government allows the newspapers to print only what suits it. There is no doubt on this point. The average soldier or officer, on either side, knows from personal experience only a very small bit of the line, his own salient, or strip of trench, or what he can discern from a neighboring hilltop. We, however, are privileged to see, with our own eyes, the conditions covering nearly a hundred miles of British front. The ordinary fighting man must take his knowledge from what the press contains, or his fellows, close at hand, can tell him. So German prisoners, when told they will be taken to London, begin to laugh:

"Why, London is destroyed!"

"You'll see," comes the quiet answer.

"Besides, no prison ship, nor any other, can cross the seas. Our submarines destroy all British ships."

They do cross; they do see London; they realize, when it is too late to communicate their knowledge, that England looks just as she has always done except for her men in khaki and her factories pouring out gun and shell. There is no mistake at all that the German people are deceived—systematically deceived—by the men that rule her. Of course I could not approach German prisoners, although I

saw many; but I could talk to the sergeant majors and commissioned officers who handle them. The prisoners are all cheerful, happy, hard-working. They delight in their tasks, as Germans always do. If they had kept on at work instead of going to war they might have conquered the world.

By the way, I talked all one evening to a delightful Scotch major, an attorney from the Highlands. When we asked him if there was any fraternizing between his troops and the Germans he replied:

"I'd like to see the Hieland mon that would fraternize wi' onybody!"

Furthermore, the German confidence is oozing. The Boche is like a cask, the seams of which have been sprung by the British artillery. He is leaking out his spirit. Slowly, in spite of his inspired press and his mendacious government, he is becoming aware that his case is hopeless. If his psychology is such that ax and crowbar are needed, at times, to get ideas in, ax and crowbar have certainly been used. He no longer fights downhill. He is fighting an uphill fight. He no longer possesses superior artillery. Even an amateur can see for himself where the major hand is at the front. He no longer scouts in the air unimpeded; he does precious little scouting at

all, although he does some and always has to fight his way.

It is just a question, then, of constant pressure and biting. How long that process must continue before the Boche caves in no man can tell. There are signs of cracking here and there. You can hear the great structure groan and creak clear across the Atlantic almost as well as one can here. When it will collapse is hidden from all but the gods alone; but that it will collapse, unless something entirely unforeseen occurs, nobody in England any longer doubts.

Confidence, therefore, is in the heart of the British nation. It cheers them immensely to realize that as long as the British bulldog is hanging on to the throat of the Hohenzollerns so long will Uncle Sam be hanging on to the ear, the hind leg, the flank, or wherever he can get a hold. I asked one of the leading British war correspondents one day what he believed America could best do for the general cause. His jaws snapped like Roosevelt's as he spat out:

"Give the death blow!"

A dozen other officers, in reply to the same question, and the head of a department at the foreign office, and twenty men on the street, all reply:

"Come to us in the air! Bring on warplanes by the thousands! Finish them from above! That is the only fluid warfare!"

Perhaps the press dispatches give America some idea of the heartening effect of American entrance to the war. But I doubt if the length and breadth and depth of that effect can be conveyed in the printed word. But this is certain: We have come at the instant of the greatest need to stand beside France, to take part of her load, to revive the drooping lilies, to repay in a beautiful fashion the debt we have owed her throughout our young life.

When all is said and done, however, it grows plainer and plainer every day that it is with our motherland that our future destiny is to be cast. England is our natural ally. For France, we have a sentimental, grateful regard; but with England the tie is one of interest, business and political interest, as well as blood and common speech and common ideals. There has existed between the two nations, British and American, a quiet understanding for nearly a hundred years. To prove it we have only to look to the three thousand miles of undefended Canadian border. We have only to remember that at Subig Bay on the famous day when Dewey dumped the Philippines in our lap, there were two other

fleets at hand, a German and a British. Said the German admiral to the British:

"What are you going to do about it?"

Said the British admiral to the German:

"That is known only to Admiral Dewey and myself."

We have only to remember the words of Admiral Sims some seven years ago in London, words for which, if I remember, he was called home and publicly rebuked and privately patted on the back:

"If ever the British Empire is seriously threatened from without, she will find the United States ready with every ship, every dollar and every drop of blood, to come to her defense."

Those words are not only fulfilled in seven years, but the author of them is promoted and in command of our naval forces on this side at the present moment. We have only to remember, further, that when we fixed the tolls for the Panama Canal England remonstrated with us, and we gave in to her; that her navy makes possible our Monroe Doctrine; that she accepted our mandate gracefully in the Venezuela matter, when she knew and we knew she could have blown us out of the water.

Britannia rules the waves. Without a doubt she must continue to rule them. And it is to

our interest that she should. Why should we ever try to rule it, when it is so much cheaper to have her do it for us? Nor is it likely that we shall ever build such a merchant marine as to compete with her. Why create a new express company when there is a line already in existence that we may ultilize on equitable terms? We may build some ships, doubtless will; but economic conditions are such that America will not be likely ever to attempt competition with the natural common carrier of the world, Great Britain.

No, it is to our interest, as well as in harmony with our cardinal principles of democracy, freedom of the seas, open ports, rights of peoples to choose their own governments, freedom of conscience; all these and more that we should stand shoulder to shoulder with Great Britain. It is little odds whether the alliance is a tacit one, as in the past, or an articulated one in the future. A quiet understanding with Great Britain is more lasting and more binding than a treaty, signed, sealed and delivered at Berlin. These two great English speaking peoples may and please God they will, together with such allies as they can gather around them, into a league for peace, a federation of states, what you please, for the

next thousand years, keep the peace of the world.

We can, in other and far finer words, fulfill the dream of the English poet laureate—no, not English any more than our own—the poet laureate of English speaking people everywhere, when he sang:

"I dipped into the future far as human eye could see,
Saw the vision of the world and all the wonder that would be;
Saw the heavens filled with commerce, argosies of golden sails,
Pilots of the purple twilight drooping down with costly bales;
Heard the heavens filled with shouting, and there rain'd a ghastly dew,
From the nations' airy navies, grappling in the central blue,
Till the war drums beat no longer, and the battle flags were furled
In the parliament of man, the federation of the world."

VI

"GENTLEMEN, ONCE MORE INTO THE BREACH"

ASKED by a friend at the visitors' château, British headquarters in France, what is my most outstanding impression after examining most of the western front, my reply was and is: "The power and calm precision of Great Britain."

This power and precision at the front is apparent even to a military tyro like myself. For a strip of at least thirty miles back of the fighting line England's great organization ceaselessly moves, wheel within wheel, cog upon cog, without haste, without creaking and screaming, without generating unnecessary heat. We saw a lorry in the ditch once or twice, but others were calmly pulling it out. We saw huge guns patiently standing under poplar trees, while men and traction engines paused for breath. We saw the field where the tanks stood in their stalls, to be groomed like —war horses, I started to say; war mastodons is better. We saw two tanks stranded on the

field of Messines. We saw the airplanes in their hangars, the only things that looked impatient, as if they were caged falcons; but the young lieutenants who drive them are the calmest of the calm, with all the devil-may-care way they have about them. It was all impressive, stopped your breath at times and made your heart go fast.

As for headquarters, it is always the quietest place in the war zone. There are a few motor cars, but not so many as at a field hospital. As for the men about headquarters, the calm and the reserve cannot be said to increase with the rank of the officers, but it certainly does not diminish. These men drive or walk in exposed positions as calmly as they attend to any other parts of their concerns.

We passed through a little village where are many French people living their accustomed lives, and where British Tommies are billeted. As we drove through it we noted children going home from school. One British soldier lay on the grass by the side of the road playing with three or four little girls. I particularly marked him for his apparent love of little children. Five minutes later, from the shoulder of a hill, we looked back and saw three German shells explode in that little hamlet, throwing up masses of brick, dirt, dust and smoke. How

many lives either of soldiers or non-combatants were taken in toll we never learned, but I have been unable to forget that soldier and those little ones.

Weeks after, when I mentioned the village and the circumstances, a British officer replied: "Yes, nobody goes there often, who does not expect sooner or later to get hit. It is a hot spot."

It is significant to observe, in these frontier villages, the number of commingled races engaged in the death grapple with the Hun. As we sat waiting for a bridge across a canal to close and let us by, we noted English, Portuguese, French, Algerian and Hindu allies standing about and trying to communicate. The Portuguese are neat, light built, swarthy little fellows, very smart in their light blue uniforms, quite similar to the French. We saw columns of them going to and coming from the front, their transports, consisting largely of animal drawn vehicles, and their air partaking somewhat of the jauntiness of the Japanese. They seem to have made a very favorable impression upon their British comrades, of whom, I am told, they are very fond. Portugal, the brand new republic, is likely to make a place of value for herself in international affairs by her conduct in this war.

There is evident eagerness along the front to welcome and discuss America and her entrance into the game. If nothing more than her moral support and the increased confidence which she has engendered in the breasts of the Allies, were to result, her part has not been played in vain; but there is much more that she is already doing over here. She has companies of foresters and railway men at work in England. Altogether, she is surprising her allies by the rapidity of her action. But the hope I hear expressed on all sides is that she will speed up the manufacture of war planes and the training of her young men to drive them. There is no other way so quickly and adequately to put an end to the air raids on defenceless women and children, as by filling the air with cavalry. The vexed question of reprisals, which is disturbing the British press and public, will then take care of itself.

A few hasty pictures of interesting spots must suffice for this chapter. Our car stops in the rain, at the foot of a steep and muddy path between dripping hedges. We dig in our sticks, and slip and slide and crawl, up, through paths and trenches, past dugouts and sandbag cottages, to a dizzy wooded hill, high over fighting ground. Here we look down from a perfect observatory, fitted with telescopes, tele-

phones, and wireless, upon the ground below, held by the Boches.

It was a point of wild beauty and grandeur, commanding view and an air of romance, fifteen hundred feet, it seemed above the plain, approached only by naturally and artifically screened ways, impregnable to attack.

Suicide Corner is the name given to a bend in a certain village street. The houses had all died of spinal meningitis, paralysis and smallpox. Such battered and punctured stucco, still to stand in the shape of walls, it is difficult to conceive. Of course the tide of battle has rolled on beyond now, but to make the scene real, a "walking wounded" man turned the corner as we drove by, his arm hanging in a blood-stained sling and his face ghastly pale. He stood, however, and chatted awhile with the military policeman who was there to direct traffic. I shall never forget that face, as he strove hard, by puffing a cigarette, to keep his features from working with pain. Several ambulances came along just at this time, filled with recumbent and sitting forms, red bandages visible, on the way from the advanced dressing station to the field hospital. There had been a bit of a raid somewhere near last night or a shellburst in a bad spot to-day.

We alighted one afternoon to view the ruins

of a handsome château that the retreating Germans had blown up as they left. The gates and winding walks were there, the cement fish-pond and even some of the flowering plants and shrubs; but the house itself was the best illustration of the phrase "not one stone left upon another," that I ever saw. Literally there were not two bricks or stones still fastened together. Even the cement, which had remained set for centuries, was crumbled into the general sand heap. It was a house left desolate, and Nature was doing her best to cover it with weeds and wild flowers that the place thereof should know it no more forever.

Leading down the slope from that château for half-a-mile or so, is a deep cut road,—the famous sunken road—bordered by Boche dug-outs. It is like a street of tenements, once inhabited by rabbits. When the English took it over Tommy refused to burrow and to-day he lives in tents where the Germans once lived under ground. I saw football and cricket, a rifle range and a practicing band,—the band made up largely of boys of twelve to sixteen—the bath houses with scores of naked bathers, the laundries and disinfecting plants all out above ground, and Tommy strolls about whistling, unmindful of occasional shells. Such is the difference between the two foes.

They told me of a football game that was going on one day in a certain field. The Huns got wind of it and dropped a few Jack Johnsons into the game. Tommy stood it a while, and then, moving to the other end of the field, calmly finished his game.

The bands play the columns up to the trenches and back again. It puts "Cheery-oh" into them. I saw a band of Highland pipers playing a column of Kilties up toward the front line, and I should not like to get in the way of a rush from these rawboned, bronzed bare-legged Scots. Some talk of the Canadians as the finest troops in Europe; some, of the French chasseurs; but who that has seen these various units of splendid fighting men, whether Irishmen, Welsh, Scotch, Lancashire, French, or territorial, can use any such expression of comparison as "the finest fighting men?"

What is to be done with all the ravaged territory when the war is over, is now engaging the attention of the French government. Expert foresters have been looking over the battle grounds of late; and it is likely that they will be planted with trees. They could not safely be farmed, on account of unexploded bombs and shells, even if the surface could be leveled

to anything like a manageable area and the soil be restored.

There is a ridge back of Vimy where thousands of Frenchmen bravely died, and where you see boots with fleshless legs in them; but what is yet more problematical for the future, there are "duds," or unexploded shells and bombs. I picked up a little bomb the size of a turkey egg and said to the captain: "Is this dangerous?"

"I should say it is dangerous. Put it down. Last week I saw a doctor in the hospital. He had one finger left on one hand and two on the other because he picked up a bomb like that."

So I gingerly laid it down. A few days later, as we entered another field, the captain reminded us: "I shall have to ask you not to touch anything without permission." We, by this time, needed no warning. On Vimy Ridge I saw a whole box of unexploded hand bombs, the size and shape of a turkey egg, while ten yards away were five or six live aerial torpedoes as big as a six-inch short shell, with flanges to guide their flight. Needless to say, I walked well around the exhibition and touched none of the works of art.

As we entered upon the shell area at a certain point, officers crossing it advised us to keep moving; for said they, "The Boche

knows that the King is somewhere hereabouts, and if the enemy see any party, they are sure to do a bit of strafing."

The King was at our château that day, in our absence. We saw the bandstand erected on the lawn, and we noted the absence of the Count's September-morn type of art on the grand staircase. When we came in at night, the most delicate and chaste porcelains and plaques adorned the walls.

No officer told us the King had been there. We simply felt it. Next day, about noon, my curiosity got the better of my discretion, and being alone with our captain, I said: "I understand royalty is somewhere in the neighborhood." A full minute of silence followed. Then he said: "I believe there is a story of that kind around." I was sorry I spoke. The English papers next week had long stories about the King at the front and pictures; but my article, written a week or two later, was censored of all mention of his majesty. Such is the intelligence and personal equation of censorship. It is all luck, after all.

It now merely remains to add that the water journey between England and the British front is admirably managed. Destroyers deploy on either side of the troop ships, and well in front, forming a triangle. As soon as we

moved off from the dock, we were all ordered to put on lifebelts. The boats poured forth a thick black screen of smoke behind, blocking the open end of the triangle. Then we steam ahead as fast as we can go.

What a pity that all this genius of Great Britain, this man power, administration, skill and science, invention and ingenuity is forced, by the madness of the Hun, into destruction, smoke, wholesale death and mud! If all that power were turned into construction, what could it not accomplish? Splendid as is London, with its massive buildings and monuments, the British army and the organization back of it could build, in a few years, a finer and more perfect city than London. God grant that it soon be given a chance to build and never again be compelled to tear down!

VII

THE BRITISH OFFICER—A NEW TYPE

THE old idea of the British officer must be changed, even as the old idea of the British Tommy. Time was when we used to think of the typical officer, especially the subaltern, as a titled, monocled young slip of a fop who had little or nothing in the way of equipment and training except social position, pull or even the money necessary to purchase a commission, who leaned on the breast of a "wet nurse" in the shape of an old bronze sergeant-major, put there to tell him what to do. That day has gone, ra-a-ther!

I remember a verse of an old poem about those times:

The sand of the desert is sodden red,
Red with the wreck of a square that broke;
The gatling's jammed and the colonel dead;
And the regiment's blind with dust and smoke,
The river of death has brimmed its banks;
England's far and honor's a name;
Yet the voice of a schoolboy rallies the ranks,
Play up, play up, and play the game!

Now, the old Rugby and Eton notion of the officered class must be revised. Echoes of the old time, however, still come to us in stories like this, which is a favorite over here:

A young subaltern was sitting in judgment upon a Tommy who had overstayed his leave. His sergeant-major was at the officer's elbow to prompt him.

"You should be ashamed, an old soldier like you," lectured the young cub. "I ought to be especially severe with you. I think I'll give you six months C. B."

Now C. B. means confined to barracks. Everything is condensed to letters in the army.

"Sh-sh-h!" said the sergeant-major. "You can't do that, sir. That's altogether too much."

"Well, make it a month then."

"No, no, sir. You can't confine a man to barr[illegible] for a month for such a petty offense."

"No?" said the young lieutenant. "Then what do you suggest?"

"A week's pay, sir; that would be quite enough."

"Very well, then, I give you a week's pay," said the young man, and reaching into his pocket, he drew out a handful of silver, counting out the seven shillings, gave them to the offender, muttering severely, "See that you

don't let it occur again!" No, sir, those good old days are gone.

Yet an incident happened to us that showed us some remnants of that helplessness in official position. We, with entire innocence, had gone into a forbidden area without a pass. Nobody challenged us. We spent two days going all over that area, riding round like kings in a motor car—which, by the way, was also unlawful—and seeing all the sights. When it was time to leave we went to the police station as usual to be checked out.

"Americans," cried the police sergeant. "Where's your pass? How'd you get here? What're you doing here?" He was plainly flabbergasted.

"We just came!" said we blandly, smiling sweetly.

It developed that no civilian had a right to go on the boat by which we had gone. Perhaps the fact we were in khaki accounted for our easy entrance; but we were perfectly innocent. The sergeant took us to the chief at the chief's residence, for it was after hours. The chief called in his clerk. Then all held a serious, perplexed consultation. They had us on their hands; they were not responsible for our coming; they did not know what to do with us. At first they insisted we were

not five feet ten as our identity books described us. We drew ourselves up and swore we were. They scrutinized our photos and our faces. Satisfied at last that we were the very chaps we claimed to be, they once again went into committee of the whole and decided to let us out of the area, provided we went by the proper boat line, and reported ourselves upon arrival to the O. C. (commanding officer) of the military district. They stamped our books and wrote in the proviso, and then, evidently relieved, thawed out and we had a lovely half hour's chat.

Next day, upon reaching the mainland, we went promptly to the O. C.'s office. Of course, they were expecting us. Of course we did not see the O. C. in person. But we saw a young subaltern and an old clerk. They evidently had formed no plan as to what to do with us. The subaltern consulted the old hand; and the old hand shook his head and had nothing to suggest. The whole history of our movements was told and retold and they looked blank and swore it was impossible. But there we were, serene flesh and blood evidence that it was even so. At last they decided to send us on to the civil police, with our thumbs in our mouths. Then, seeing

the old clerk could suggest nothing definite, the Yankee asserted himself.

"No you don't," I said, "we are not going to chase over to the police and be sent back here, or somewhere else. You are going to write a writing of some kind, put some kind of a rubber stamp on it—we don't care what—or else we are going to spend the rest of the day quietly in these delightful chambers." So in two minutes it was done and the perplexed young cub had taken instructions from an out and out greenhorn. That is a remnant of old days.

The British officer of to-day has been through the mill. No man is supposed to buy a commission any longer. Who am I that I should say it is not, in rare instances, even yet done? But taken for all in all, officers to-day have come up through every degree of training and actual service in the ranks. Many have got their stripes for bravery or efficiency and all have passed certain set examinations. There are no good old days nor good old ways left in the army. To be sure, likely men are seized upon, college men, specialists, even labor contractors and foremen, and are prepared for commissions, but they must first be common Tommies, in training for months, then cadets, with a white band

round their caps to indicate that they are blossoming into command; then, after examinations, full-fledged officers.

I have not found British officers reserved. I have found them modest, sometimes even to bashfulness; and about military matters, close mouthed as oysters. But, as someone has said, Englishmen, if they once open up, are perfectly willing to tell you all about themselves. If they like you they will easily open up. If they don't like you you might as well talk to a bronze statue. To-day the American, if he shows himself even halfway modest, is ace high among the Allies and they are eager to like him and talk to him.

As for myself I want no more charming companion and friend than a cultivated English officer. They are tact personified in spite of certain old American preconceptions.

One of the most attractive was a Highland major, next to whom I sat at dinner one night at the château in France. He was an attorney before the war and wondered how he was ever going to settle down to routine office work when all was done. He was forty or thereabouts, had just married in 1914, and had inflammatory rheumatism twice in his life, which left him with a bad heart. But he volunteered on the first day of war through sense of duty

—and got by the doctors undetected. He told me how he lay night after night in his trench dugout in mud and water, and cursed himself for a fool, when all he had to do was to go to a surgeon and be transferred to base. But he was absurdly healthy all the time and seemed to bear a charmed life. Men were killed all round him, one night one on each side of him, and he was unscathed. He had developed a sort of fatalism, as so many do in the front lines, which he would admit only as a sort of Calvinism.

"Ah," said he, "it is in the trenches you come to see the bottom of men's hearts!"

That remark gave me my opening. I asked him what he meant by seeing to the bottom of men's hearts. He started, looked me between the eyes, and opened up. I thought he was hungry for religion, and my surmise was correct. He was a man of the world, but a churchman. He had not been to church for three years; had been to a parade service once or twice; expressed disappointment with the padre, and had had no religious conversation in all that time.

"Britishers do not talk much about such things, although they think much," he explained. When he found I was willing to talk of religion he would not let go of me all that

evening, but led me out under the trees on the great lawn, and kept me till late bedtime. I shall never forget that splendid Highland "mon," and that night.

War has shaken English conservatism to its foundations. It will be long, I hope it will be centuries, and so do the English, before they relapse again into the satisfaction with old things and old ways that if Germany had only been wise enough to keep on in her conquering commercial path, might have led to the peaceful absorption of the British Empire. These men are now eager for new things, new ideas, new speed and efficiency, new precedents, or none at all. They are actually growing impatient of the old formula: "This is good enough for us, because it was good enough for our fathers. It always has been done this way; it always must be done just so."

Something of the new attitude may be found in the contrast of two padres, whom one sees to be typical of two classes. One of them riding on a bicycle passed a soldier of his own regiment who did not salute. The padre got down off his wheel, reprimanded the man, and made him salute. Of course the man did so; and, of course, he told all his mates and, of course, it went through the bat-

talion; and that padre never had any more influence among those men. Another big raw-boned Scotch chaplain, just back from France, had not heard of the new order that all officers in public must carry or wear kid gloves. He was swinging along, when a little subaltern stopped him and cried:

"I say padre! an officer must wear kid gloves, don't you know!"

"Now look here, sonny," came the rich growl from the Highland breast, "you toddle along, will you! there's been too much kid glove about this war, anyhow!"

I bet my bottom dollar that padre is not without influence in his own battalion.

The coolness and nonchalance of British officers is proverbial. We all have mental pictures of them leading their men over the parapets. They go with cigarettes in their mouths, no weapon in hand but a swagger stick, and their lawn tennis manners on. If you have such a picture in your mind you need not change it. After the early days of the war the general staff became more economical of officers. The mortality had been far too high, and bravery is now more tempered with discretion. But there is no discounting the elegant and easy *sang froid* of these highly mannered Englishmen. I have

seen them at it and I know. Particular about trifles of conduct? Well, I should say! One of them told me without realizing how typical he was, how he sat one day in a tram in Liverpool and became conscious of the man across the aisle gazing at him:

"You know how some people will do; they begin at your boots, travel all the way up and finish off at your hat! Beastly annoying, don't y'know! Well, I decided to give him as good as he sent. So I just laid down my paper and I met him with an eye volley straight in the nose. A few days later I met a naval officer face to face, and although a stranger to me, he said he had seen me a few days before and had annoyed me by gazing at me, that he did not mean to be impertinent, that he was only envious. His own uniform was not to be done until late in the week. Then he told me with great glee that he had joined his ship, which was a destroyer, on a Wednesday, had put to sea on Friday, got in among a nest of U-boats, bagged three, and was back on Saturday. I never saw a man so happy."

Nobody knows all the stories of coolness and heroism among the naval men. We shall not learn them till the war is over, but here is one that perhaps the censors will allow to

go by. It was told me by a medical officer who was aboard the Franconia when she was sunk while acting as a transport.

"We had five or six naval officers aboard. They were sitting in the smoking room—remember the smoking lounge in the old Franconia? It was very long, as long as this dining room, and twice as broad. They had just ordered whisky sodas. Suddenly there was an explosion and the steel floor of that smoking room just buckled up and burst apart in the middle, spilling the whisky sodas into the bottom of the ship. One of those officers called the steward and said:

" 'I ask you to witness, steward, that we have paid for these whisky sodas and have not had time to drink them.'

"Then the rascals went below, got on their lifebelts, came back again, asked the steward for a big sheet of foolscap, wrote out a long, 'we the undersigned,' setting forth that they had ordered six whisky sodas, for which they had paid nine shillings, with a sixpence tip, and had not been allowed to drink them. Therefore they entered a claim against the British government for the nine shillings and sixpence with accrued interest from date. Then they walked in a body up to the bridge and handed it to the skipper. The old man

told me afterwards he never was so grateful to anybody as to these cool young devils for the steadying and bucking up influence of their impudence."

It was the same medical officer who told me he was on duty at one of the entry ports, where the American medical units were coming through. It was his function among other things to welcome arrivals from our country, see them through the customs and start them on the way to the war office in London. It came to be a habit to bring the American doctors to the police authorities, and, with the assurance that these men were all right, hustle them by in a herd. One day he noticed that one of these American arrivals could speak only poor English. Except, however, for wondering a bit, he thought little of the circumstance, but sent the man on to London. A short time after, word came that the doctor with the lame English had not appeared at the war office. Then, in about six weeks came further word that the man had been caught and shot as a spy.

"Yes," cut in a colonel, sitting near, an old stager. "They are daring devils, some of these Boches. I have seen them in staff officers' uniforms, going about our lines in France, giving orders like any brass hat of

them all, and then shot next day at sunrise for German spies."

These officers get "fed up" on war talk. They unbend like a loosened bow if an opportunity comes to discuss late art, music or old architecture. Some of them, of course, have read little, or only in certain lines, but when you come to the men of culture among them, you have to keep your memory working lively to keep pace with the rich flow of literary reference that ornaments their conversation. Then, after a season of this detached refreshment, before you are aware, the bow is bent again, the old look of thoughtful strain comes back, and you know that these are the men who have bent their shoulders to the task, and will not relax until they have seen it through, who are saying to themselves, consciously or unconsciously, "This one thing I do."

VIII

TOMMY ATKINS UP TO DATE

TO ask what do you think of Tommy Atkins is like asking what do you think of the Democratic party, or the industrial classes, or the late subjects of the Czar. It might have been possible, before the war, to lump Tommy Atkins in a type, as Kipling could do—the type of the British regular, just as you could formerly classify the American soldier. But that time is now gone. There is really no such thing as Tommy any more, although we continue to refer to him as if there were. The private British soldier of to-day is a highly variegated and diverse individual.

If you come into anything like close touch with him, get acquainted with large numbers of him—you see one will speak as if he were a type—you learn from what different origins he comes, or more properly they come.

They may be reduced to outward similarity by the unvarying khaki; just as men would be so reduced if they were stripped of all

clothing; but, within, by birth, training, environment, they differ all up and down the gamut of British society.

An incident, told me by an officer, will admirably illustrate this. A woman in a certain town in the south was told by a sergeant-major that three men were to be billeted in her house.

"But I will not have them!" indignantly cried the "lady of the house."

"You'll have to, madam," softly responded the sergeant.

"What, three common Tommies in my house! It's an outrage; I'll not have it!"

"It's orders, madam, and the men will be here at 5 o'clock to-day."

The sergeant left her, fuming and fussing. At the appointed hour the men came; but the "lady" would have nothing personally to do with them. They were turned over to the maids, ate in the kitchen, slept in the attic or the barn; they "jolly well" enjoyed themselves, too, for the several days of their stay in the company of the maids.

When the time came to depart they asked to see their hostess, as they had not glimpsed her face and were desirous of thanking her for her hospitality. She grudgingly consented to tell them good-by, although she would not

tell them how do you do. When they were shown into the presence of the graven image, one handed her his card, while expressing his gratitude, and it read: "Sir James Blank." Another did the like, and it was: "Rufus MacDonald, Bart," we'll say. The third was the sixth son of Lord So-and-So, and wore the title of "Hon." To say that the rank-loving woman ate her bread in tears for weeks to come is to put it mildly.

Here's another good illustration of the diversities of soldierly origin, told me by the padre who had had part in the conversation.

"How do you like your hutmates, me mon?" says the padre. "Me mon" in this case happened to be Sir Angus MacAngus of Angus, let us say.

"O, they'll do," answered the Scotch nobleman, for this nobleman was a real one. "Let's see, there's the barrister from Glasgo', he's keen, sir. There's the costermonger from Edinboro', he's no bad sort. There's the professor from Aberdeen; the merchant, the chartered accountant, and the cotter from up Inverness way. They'll do, sir, fair enough; they'll do."

There were a whole string of others, but I have exhausted my knowledge of Scotch towns and localities, as well as occupations; and I

do not write shorthand, so could not take down the padre's words as he told me the story. My geography of a Scottish battalion is no doubt badly upset, as it is. Anyway, some notion is given you of the pull made upon all the men of the empire to supply the rank and file.

Many men entirely capable of becoming officers prefer to remain privates for a variety of reasons. Thus, a private takes no responsibility. He is looked after, instead of being compelled to look after anybody. His danger is not so great as that of an officer who must be the first over the top in a charge. Perhaps not many men of the highest grade of heroism, you say, would be actuated by this latter motive, and yet, after all, a man who becomes a soldier of any rank has made the supreme sacrifice. He offers his life, whether it is taken or not; he gives his all; it is not needful to expect all of them to go beyond.

I sat for some days at table with a fine, square built Canadian officer. At last I learned his history. He was a theological graduate of McGill University. He enlisted as a stretcher bearer in a medical unit, thinking he could there do the most good and the least harm.

He did nothing but carry stretchers, which

requires tremendous physical vigor and endurance, men having to hurry at times to escape shell fire. They must often set a heavy car on rails, double quick. They must go up through the barrage. Men's legs finally give way in this work, with a sort of rheumatism. There is intense pain for two weeks, then they can hardly walk. They often hugged walls in shell fire, so a shell would have to pierce two or three walls before reaching them. He asked for some work that would give him a chance for study. The colonel said "Chaplain?" "No, I'd rather be in a combatant unit." He felt that he could do more good there.

He was assigned to the Royal Garrison Artillery School for Officers and has been in London ten months studying. He was never wounded. He thinks war deepens religious life and sobers men.

"Men who've been out to France don't laugh easily. Jokes must be good to make them laugh," said he. I know this to be true from sad experience with some of my own.

There is scarcely a battalion but has a corporal or a private who was organist of a great church, an artist of distinction, a singer or a writer, and none without men who in private life had known the great universities,

or the great commercial houses, or the big politics of the nation.

I could name you several deathless books that have fallen from the hands of young men who now sleep beside the Somme, or Vimy Ridge, or Ypres; and I have shaken the hands that will yet pen great poetry and plays, or paint great pictures, or compose great symphonies if they live, which may God grant.

Perhaps among the Colonials, that is the troops from Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the overseas dominions of Great Britain in general, are to be found the strangest tricks of fate in upsetting ante-bellum social conditions. Thus an Australian officer told me of a young subaltern who was compelled to fix a penalty for a private soldier under him. The soldier had stayed out of barracks beyond his allotted leave. Said the young man:

"I don't know what to do except to dock you a month's pay. A month's pay, then, it is!"

In private life that common soldier is the employer of the young subaltern and is holding the job for him until the war is done.

Another story is on everybody's lips here about an Australian colonel who addressed his battalion before a certain famous review and said, among other things:

"Now, men, do try and behave well to-day and do yourselves and me credit, and, for God's sake, don't let anybody forget and call me Bill!"

This democratic spirit of the Colonials is a great scandal to the ideas of discipline cherished by the English army. No private in England may speak to an officer, in any circumstances; and I saw in a daily paper where a certain officer had been court-martialed for dining with one of his men. The plea was guilty and the defense was that in private life the common soldier was a man of good social position, but this fact will not avert the penalty.

Officers can only travel first class on railways and privates only third. A young man complained to me that he and his brother, who was an officer, could not travel together when coming home from France on leave, and could not speak to each other in public. This rigidity is somewhat relaxed in the stress of the immediate front; but tightens again as the danger passes; and it is beyond doubt also wise, for a variety of reasons which cannot here be set forth. It is enough to say that only iron discipline can avoid terrible loss of life when men are charging slowly forward behind a barrage of fire. Colonial lack of

discipline at first cost more than one trench, more than one gun, and thousands of lives; but all that has now been remedied, and the men of Canada and of Australia have won undying fame at Vimy and Messines not only for bravery but for disciplined self control.

No doubt our American militia will be found to err on the democratic side when they come across; and one who has seen something of the war can only exhort them to fall in as soon as possible with the rigid ideas of discipline in the British army. To obey, and obey rigidly and to the letter, will save losses in the long run. It is not needful to lose one's personality and become an automaton like the boche, as the individual initiative and heroism of the British has shown, times out of mind; but it is needful to obey, not to do more than one is told and never to go further than one is ordered.

I am here reminded of the word of an old French *poilu* who was guarding German prisoners when we passed the spot, where they were at work upon the roads. We said:

"Do any of them ever escape?"

"Never," said the old soldier. "They are afraid to escape. They know the French women would cut their throats. Oh, they are much afraid of our French women."

And is there not cause?

"Are they contented? Are they good workers?" asked we.

"Contented? To be sure," said he. "Are they not slaves?"

Concerning the free democracy of the Colonial troops I heard a good story the other night at the château, which the officer who told it said he had from General Birdwood, himself, commander-in-chief of the Australian forces. It was a rainy night, and the general, his insignia all covered with waterproofs, came upon one of his men leaning against a wall, his rifle ten or twelve feet away. Said the general:

"What are you doing here, my man?"

"I'm the bally sentinel, sir," said the man. "And who the hell are you?"

"I'm the bally general," answered Birdwood.

"Well," said the soldier gathering his great length and breadth together leisurely. "Wait till I get me gun and I'll salute a bally general!"

"Birdie," as his men fondly term him, was very gleeful over the story. I give it not on my own authority, but that of the officer.

The Australian Tommy reminds me of the Texas or Colorado cowpuncher of a genera-

tion ago, long, brown, angular, more or less loose jointed and careless of gait, appearance and manner. His field hat, jauntily turned up at the side, and pinned with a bronze sunburst, is made, I am told, of rabbits' fur, reduced to felt by a certain pneumatic pressure. I closely examined the texture, and it seemed as fine and tough as the felt in an American army Stetson. The cavalry carry ostrich plumes in the turned up side of the hat brim.

The New Zealand troops, wearing field hats just like our own, peaked at the top, and with a red hat band instead of our cord, seem to me to possess a certain lithe grace of carriage and distinction of countenance, all their own. They, too, are tall, slender fellows, without the awkwardness of the Australian, or the beef of the English. They remind me of Harvard and Yale track teams done up in khaki. You would think them born aristocrats, from their cleanly chiseled features and well-set-up forms. I find, too, that others have received the same impression of them.

As for the Canadians, they are our close neighbors, and we know them well in America. Their discipline and their democracy are pretty much like our own. One of their generals was a wholesale grocer before the war; another was a young attorney, who came up

through the ranks. Their officers were largely business and professional men, commercial travelers and clerks. They are the type of men in our American militia; and what the Canadians did, like the Princess Pat's, at Ypres—there are only six or seven of them now left in active service—or the long sweeping line of them at Vimy Ridge, that can our own lads do in—well, never mind the place to which the railway is a-building in France.

So, you see, the British Tommy, like woman, has an infinite variety. And his spirit! Well, it is like that of John Brown, which goes marching on, with a song. How they sing! Grave faced fellows they are at times; pain of wounds is written upon their countenances, in wheel-chairs, on crutches; the burden of a great task reveals itself in a set look in the eyes of perfectly healthy men on march, or looking out from trench or high observatory; but start them singing in a hut or by a roadside, or on the way down to the transport at the quay and—how they sing!

The German used to sing. "Deutschland Ueber Alles" once rang over these fields and through these woods, and "Die Wacht am Rhein" and "Ein Feste Burg"; but now, sad to relate, because of the heartlessness of their rulers, the disregard of humble human life,

the song is crushed out of the heart of song-loving Germany.

The London cockney is the most amusing man in the service, always witty and bright, effervescent, bubbling with repartee; and when the cockney is quite young and gathered together by the hundreds in a hut, as at a certain camp I know, he is like a storm of mirth. One such fellow, a costermonger, was selling strawberries in the streets the other day, during the air raid. He never stopped crying his wares, but we heard him add a line to his song:

Strawberries! Strawberries! Fresh and red!
May as well die with a sweet tooth in your head!

At a certain convalescent camp in France, where are thousands of men, I saw them working at their trades. Some were bootmakers, mending what we call shoes; tailors were overhauling clothing; one fine featured young chap, who looked to me like an artist or a Greek scholar of Cambridge, blushed when he saw me watching how he darned socks, then grinned back at me; tinners were making things out of old biscuit cans; carpenters, making furniture out of packing cases; others were melting down the solder from waste tins. I saw a poster in the theater dining room—

"The Bijou"—which from memory I reproduce:

> Competition Friday night. Every man do the thing he does best, as well as he can do it. Here is a chance for artists, artistes and would be artists. Do your best for the sake of YOURSELF.

On the least encouragement, Tommy brings out the photographs of wife, children or sweetheart to show you. A man cannot be all wrong, so long as he does this. Take him for all in all, the British Tommy is surely a man! There is no great bin of apples but has its speckled ones; yet, by and large, I mean, the British army compels admiration in any observer who delights in looking upon real men. We shall not see its like again, you and I; for when this war is done, completely done, that vast army will melt back into a nation once more, a nation of clerks and shopkeepers, scholars and artists, manufacturers and sailors, parliamentarians and colonizers, while there is rung in, let us trust, the thousand years of peace.

IX

TWO UNDECORATED HEROES

I TALKED for hours, recently, with two heroes who will never wear a decoration! Indeed, I talk with heroes every day. Some are lads of eighteen and twenty, who tell me how they went over the top; how they felt when their bayonets first pierced German breasts—"a bit shaky, sir, yes, sir"; how they got "theirs" from a bit of shell, shrapnel, or machine gun ball; how they lay three days and nights in a shell hole, or crawled back far enough for comrades to find them; how they are "quite all right now, sir," and eager to get back to France, or "unfit for active service" and are set to guarding German prisoners.

A young Virginian named Burke, red headed and eighteen, carried two gold stripes on his arm. The first is for a wound through the shoulder and the second through the thigh.

"I'm going back next week, sir," he said, "and is there any way I could get transferred to the American army?"

The handsomest woman we have met in England opened conversation with three of us the other day, in a railway carriage, and bit by bit we learned her story.

"My husband was killed three years ago. All the men I know have been killed. Nobody in our sphere of life is left. My little boy is the last of his name; he will inherit that great place yonder. But we can no longer bear it in England. We shall go to the colonies. I am under thirty, but life to me is done."

She is a superb woman, a Juno. There was no tear, no heroics, no melodramatics. It tugged at our hearts.

Another incident I would not have believed, if told to me by another. Some of us went with "Captain Peg" to a cinema.

"Ah, there are friends of mine," said he. "How do you do?" bowing to them. "That is Mrs. ———, and her daughter. She lost three sons in France, and has another at the front."

They were showing war films—the siege of Antwerp. It was said the films had been taken at great risk, by the consent of the military authorities. By and by, a young officer in a trench turned toward the camera and smiled. He was life size, and very handsome.

"Herbert, oh, my Herbert!" Mrs. ——— behind us, was standing, her hands outstretched towards the screen. Then a shell came, or a mine, and Herbert was blown into bits. The mother fell fainting. She had known her son was dead, but never how he died. Captain Peg gathered her in his arms and bore her out.

Now, for the two heroes. The first, we met in an officers' training camp at G—— Park—the beautiful private grounds of an English mansion. There were lads with down on their chins, the flush of youth and health on their cheeks. They were college men for the most part. Some were fine musicians. Some were men over thirty who had been making as much as $25,000 and $30,000 a year as managers in "the city." All now were in the rough khaki! There was a viscount or two, sons of dukes and earls, and of M. P.'s, double honor men at Oxford or Cambridge.

"Yes, my father," said one, modestly, yet with pride, "was with Mr. Balfour's commission to America. He is a member of Parliament and quite a speaker. You see, sir, Mr. Balfour is no longer young, and must have someone to help him with the talking."

It was the best audience I had spoken to in England, and I enjoyed my address im-

mensely, whether anybody else had a good time or not. I could imagine myself talking to Missouri University cadets, my own lads among them.

All this time I paid little heed to a small man in civilian dress in a dim corner. Then the secretary, Mr. Bull, informed me that Mr. Dyer was going back to town by our train.

"He is a great Y. M. man. He heard I was perplexed about my lighting system for this hut and came out to help me. He has a hut of his own in Camberwell—the finest in England. You will enjoy talking with him."

"Ay, ay," thought I. "He will bore me all the way in. He must be one of the unco' guid."

He was in reality, a heavily charged carbonated bottle. I lazily pulled the cork when we were in the compartment and he effervesced. We sat up and took notice, interjecting a question here and there.

"Yes, sir, I'm a business man. I work twelve hours a day. Furniture is my line. Thirty-three years in Camberwell Road. When the war came I built a hut o' me own on Camberwell Green, just across from my place. Oh, yes, it took some work to get the consent of the council; it took eighteen months. I gathered twelve thousand signatures and

addressed many public meetings. Yes, I work three nights a week at Victoria Station."

"Three nights—you mean all night, and then back to business——"

"Yes, sir, all night, and a bite of breakfast, then back to business."

"But, man, you'll kill yourself!"

"What's the odds? Didn't ye say in your address, a few years more or a few years less, what odds?"

Here he ran his hands through his thick, snow-white hair.

"Three years ago this was black as the crow; and I'm fifty-five. But the lads are dying for me and mine. I've a lad at the front now—flying corps. Once I had three. Now only the one."

"What do you do all the night?"

"I go after the lads. There are twenty thousand a night that come into the town, straight from the trenches or elsewhere. The same people are waiting to get them, sharks, they are, and I can pick one out of their clutches now and again. When I see a woman of the town nab one I go up and say, 'Bad company, old chap.' Then he may say, 'What the hell is it to you?' I've been knocked down three times; but sometimes I get him, give the girl some money and take him to my

hut, a bath and a clean, nice bed. Sometimes I get a drunk one—the police turn him over to me. There was a mine sweeper, and his wife and children waitin' for him"—but the story is too long. Enough to say the mine sweeper went home sober for his holiday, stayed sober and came back with a great bouquet of coarse flowers from the "missus." He was lost at sea next trip.

"Then there was a lad dog-tired, so tired he could hardly speak, straight from the trenches. He was filthy. He came with me half asleep. I took off his clothes m'self. His feet were blistered. I gave him his bath and put him in clean night-clothes and between clean sheets. I took his wallet and found ninety-five pounds in it!

"Then I found his father's address and rang him up on the telephone. It was past midnight, and he cursed me when he came to the 'phone. I told him I had his son. Then there was a pause. He said he'd be there in half an hour. The big motor rolled up, and the man came in. He was a stock broker, and he and his lad had not spoken for some years. The boy had run through half his fortune. He came in and stood by the little bed, and cried; then he bent down and kissed the sleeping boy, and went away. I arranged for them to meet next morning at ten."

There is more to the story, but the lad is an officer now in France, an honor to his father.

Story after story poured from the lips of the little white-haired man, as we rolled up to London. Our throats were drawn and ached.

"Good night, gentlemen, and will you come and see my hut, some time, in Camberwell?"

"By Jove, old man, you can't shake us. We're going straight to your darned old hut, if it takes all night."

We drove through the dark streets, the little man beaming and pointing out all the spots immortalized by Dickens, such as Marshalsea Prison, Blackman's Road and Shakespeare's first dwelling in London and the like. He was certainly up on old London.

We had expected disappointment in the hut; but there it stood, flashing out in the night, like an officers' club. Indeed it looked like an officers' club within.

"This is the lady manageress," said Mr. Dyer, introducing us, and a handsome lady smiled and bowed. "This is Alderman So-and-so." Then beneath his breath, "Yonder is the Duchess of ———." The little man was all swelled up with innocent pride. There were four handsome billiard tables in apple pie order, in a room all to themselves. There

was a writing room that would do credit to a seaside hotel. There were great easy chairs, dainty hangings and tasty crockery.

There were well chosen pictures everywhere. It was midnight, and the place was full of Tommies. I tell you, it was as handsome as an officers' club. Then there were the lavatories and showers. We tiptoed into the dormitory —a hundred and seventy-five beds, as clean and artistic as your boy's bed at home, the linen all changed every day and the price sixpence a night. For a little more a lad may have a neat little room alone.

Then we walked out in the "tea garden" in Camberwell Green, under the moon.

"It's fine to serve tea in, in summer, now, isn't it, sir? There is but one thing more I want to make the place complete. I shall build a room just here, with a bow window full of glass, for the sun to come in; where husbands and wives, fathers and sons may meet, to talk alone. You know they do get estranged, when separated in the war, and they must talk it out alone to get set right, you know, sir."

"Have you brought husbands and wives together again?"

"Oh, time and again sir. Now there was——"

"Look here, Mr. Dyer, is this the night you're to stay up all night?"

"No, to-morrow night."

"Then, you go home and go to bed. You shan't stand 'gassing' to us all night."

He will never wear a decoration—in this life, at least.

The other hero is a Scotch Presbyterian chaplain, Captain Robertson. He stands six feet and an inch in his stockings, is built like a North American Indian, with a face by Phidias or Praxiteles. He is just from a hospital, convalescent from wounds received in France. It was dim twilight in the corner of the hut where we sat very close, eye to eye, and I got his story out of him, in the clean-cut English, almost American English, characteristic of the cultivated Scot.

"Ah, 'tis great experience! I am almost fit to go back—breathing is still a bit bad. I don't know if they will let me go back. Yes, I was in a transverse, coming back from the front line trenches—yes, I was in the front line every day—when the shell got me.

"I did not think at first I was hurt, but felt a strange sense of exhilaration. My left arm, though, was twisted clear around in front of me and quite useless. Still I thought it was but shock. I walked on, feeling no pain, to the

dressing dugout. The doctor asked me what was the matter, as I looked pale. I told him I supposed I was hit. They cut off my tunic, and I was bleeding profusely in the chest and under the arm, which was broken here and here.

"A large piece of shell had cut through my check book, which was just beneath my heart, and penetrated the side. If the check book had not been there it might really have been serious. I fainted by the by. They operated. I had ever so long in the hospital. Ah, yes; you never know brotherhood except in the danger and in the hospital. Brotherhood—that is the great discovery of this war.

"Another time, in the town of A——, in the ruins of the cathedral, I had a marvelous escape. I took refuge from the shelling, as I was passing on the street, and one burst fifteen yards away; they kill at thirty. Fragments whizzed past my ears and I was covered with débris. It was the Almighty. We had called a service for that day and had sung only a few hymns, prayed, and I had begun to preach when the major stepped up to me saying:

" 'It is too dangerous, captain. We must disperse the men.'

" 'Righto!' said I, though I had begun to

forget to be afraid in the interest in my sermon. Wonderful how interesting a man's sermon becomes to himself!

"Oh, yes, in the trenches every day and all day, visiting the men. One night an officer said to me:

" 'Let's crawl across No Man's Land, only ninety yards, and see the Hun at home.'

" 'What's the good of being a fool?' said I. But we went. We peeped down into the trench, but never a Boche was in sight.

"I was saying the burial service once in a cemetery—just a passage or two from the Good Book, d'ye know, and a prayer. A few soldier lads were there. Shells were whizzing over all the time. Suddenly we heard the loud whirr of aircraft and machine guns. The lads scattered crying: 'She's coming down in flames. Run! Run!'

"I opened my eyes and looked up. There was a plane, all afire, coming straight down at my head. I was glued to the spot. Then, just above me, she veered off with the wind, and fell fifty yards away. Ah, yes, it was the Almighty! It burned a long time; yes, it was our own. When the flames had done, there was naught of the two brave lads but two shriveled mummies. It is a great experience, a great life. I hope to go back."

X

BRITISH ARE BRAVE IN SORROW

THE iron has certainly pierced the heart of British homes, and is entering deeper and deeper every day; but braver and more determined people do not live. The time is at hand when American homes may look forward to the same destiny. Daily, almost hourly, I have been brought into touch with the sorrows of British hearts, and the heroism. Perhaps some of their stories may strike responsive chords in American breasts and tune them for the same high courage.

He was a tall bearded Australian. We were sitting together, after breakfast, in the "lounge" of a London hotel. He was in the uniform of an officer of the Red Cross. We fell into conversation, and I naturally called him "doctor."

"No," said he, "I am not a physician, but a plain business man." Then he told me how it all came about. His son was in the army, had been wounded at the Dardanelles; and the

father had come all the way to watch over him. The lad recovered, rejoined his battalion and was killed at the Somme. "Then," said the father, "there was nothing for me to do but to stay here. Oh, yes, I have another son, and a daughter, but why should I go back? He was all in all to me, my comrade, my best friend. He was such a cheery, amiable boy, and he loved me as a companion better than any other. We were more like brothers. So I joined up, in the medical corps, to do what I could among the wounded lads in the hospitals." Then we compared photographs of our sons, a very common procedure over here.

I fell to thinking, though I did not tell him of it, about two Australian boys I had seen on the battlefield of the Somme, about a quarter of a mile from the famous sugar factory. They were busy about something at the side of the crater filled road. They hailed us and told us it was no good trying to get through with our motor, so we alighted and went over to talk with them. Then we saw what they were engaged upon. It was a slab of sandstone; and they were carving with their jack-knives, in beautiful regular letters an "in memoriam" for a comrade whose young head lay somewhere in the storm-tossed earth

close at hand. Officers and all, we stood there silent, rather awestruck; and, though we said nothing, afterwards our thoughts all went back to that far away shore where only a few months before, no doubt, for these soldiers were beardless boys, they had played in field and forest, in country lane, or rolling surf, or city street, with that other boy hero, who lay asleep under the fast greening earth. Yes, birds sing over those battlefields. I heard skylark and thrush above that young lad's grave. I heard them and saw them, even, in the smoke and thunder of the guns.

There was a young lad at work in the kitchen of the Y. M. C. A. canteen. He was in "civies," but there were gold stripes on his sleeve, the little gold stripes that tell the story of deep danger and suffering. They are not given unless the wound puts one into hospital for a prolonged stay. A closer glance betrayed the scars in face and neck; but he was such a slip of a boy to be a veteran, disabled, unfit. I made inquiries and found he was not yet seventeen. He had enlisted in the navy, expecting, of course, to be sent to sea; but in the press of affairs and the shortage of men, marines were sent into the trenches and he was among them. He got his, and got it badly. He was recovering, however, and, anxious to serve,

was at work washing cups and cooking until the time came when he could go back. They will not, of course, let him go again into trench work until he is nineteen.

"They need such a lot of loving," said a fat, middle aged matron in a hospital to me, half apologetically, the other evening as she came bustling a bit late into the canteen. "You see, some of these lads have never been away from home before; and there is a world of love in their homes; we don't realize, I think, how, in the poorer homes, there is so much love. I sometimes think the poorer they are the more there is. Anyway, they need a lot, and I try to give it to them."

Most of these had come back from Salonika, Egypt, East Africa, with fevers, especially malaria. Some had been in hospitals months, nearly or quite a year. They did their best to sing and cheer, but their faces were drawn and yellow and their brows damp. One lad looked infinitely sad in the second row. I could not make him out. Then they told me that he was deaf from fever, and had been so for months. Of course, he could not sing and he would shake his head now and then and wrinkle his forehead. One fine young Canadian, with hollow cheeks, I was talking to, and asked him to come and sit nearer the

front. He shook his head and smiled and pointed to the window. His heart goes back on him and he needed air.

One night, in a hospital, while the singing was most uproarious, I noticed a big, burly patient take a smaller comrade on his back and carry him out. Afterwards the nurses said the smaller one had had all the fun he could stand for the present. He was going hot and cold by turns, and chilling. Was he shot through the legs or spine? Oh, no, no wound at all, only shell-shock; but he could not walk, hardly speak. Months some of them are like that, no wound, but loss of memory, speech, hearing, even motion of any kind sometimes.

On a Sunday night I was speaking in a suburban chapel, in London, when I saw a young soldier lying flat in a long basket upon wheels rolled up beside the pulpit. By and by it was announced that Private So-and-So would sing. A little plain woman, his wife, they told me, stepped up to the recumbent boy—he was no more than a boy—raised him to a sitting posture, put pillows at his back and sat down at the piano. Then he sang in a sweet, clear tenor an old gospel song, simple and unostentatious, "And I shall See Him Face to Face." They afterwards told me a machine gun ball had lodged in his spine;

surgeons all feared to operate. He was paralyzed from the waist down. One surgeon said if the boy was willing he would take a chance. When he talked with the patient the latter said, "Well, doctor, I am not in your hands, but the good God's. Do as you think best." The bullet was removed, but whether the lad will ever walk again nobody knows except Him in whose hands he is.

An old dock laborer, his hair white as snow, took me aside the other day after a meeting at a certain port. I had made some reference to our sons. He only wanted to tell me about his own, his only boy, who lay out yonder at Bethune. "His grave is marked, too. My nephew saw it. I shall go there, of course, when the war is done. I'd a great deal rather be lying there now in his place if I could. Reconciled? Oh, yes, sir, I'm growing reconciled. After all, it was a noble death for the boy, and he'll miss all the trouble of this world. He went away so happy and brave." Everywhere I see something of that father love that would rather take the son's place if it could. Much is said about mother love, and it is quite the most beautiful thing in the world, but there is something to be said, too, for father love, for it has little to say for itself.

In a home of wealth and luxury, we sat

talking, when a man of sixty made the first reference to his boy. I was wondering if there were any sons. I saw two daughters. When it came it was about like this: "That was before Harry was killed." There was an involuntary movement of hand to forehead, and a wrinkling across the brow, then the conversation went on.

Another little short Scotchman with white mustache, a manager in a great shell factory, was showing us through. By and by, when he and I were alone, some reference to sons fell from my lips. "Ay," said he quickly, "I have a son out there, he is under the ground—this way, gentlemen!"

Do not think, however, that they are all under the ground. One lovely white-haired woman in a canteen hut told me of five sons she has given to her country. All have been in the service. One, the youngest, lost his right arm, the eldest is a mighty pilot in the flying corps. "Oh, yes, I'm proud of him. He is a flight commander, yes, captain is his rank. He was home on leave last week. He has just shot down his sixth plane and killed the eighth Hun. He is a fine lad!"

Another woman in a neighboring hut told how her son had had his twenty-second operation, and she felt sure he would now get well.

She had just been to see him in the hospital, on the South Coast. "He was an officer, you see; and was hit in the leg below the knee. His servant tried to carry him back to the trenches, when the Germans saw them and turned a machine gun on them. The servant was killed and my son received nine bullets in his back. Then he lay out five days and five nights in a shell hole." I have known of wounded men lying out six days, subsisting on their emergency rations of hard tack and bully beef and a canteen of water. These long waits for help are not at all uncommon. Then she continued: "Oh, no, it was not the wounds in his back that gave all the trouble. They easily got those bullets out, but it was the leg. Gangrene set in and they have been amputating a little more and a little more, and it seemed as if they could never check it. Really, I believe a little American nurse saved him, for after the last operation, as the doctors stood about, she said, 'If this was out in France they'd use so and so.' 'What's that?' said the chief surgeon, sharply. She repeated her remark. The surgeon said he'd never heard of it, asked if she had the formula and knew how to use it. She did, 'and my son has been improving right along.' "

I'm sure I don't know whose conduct was

the finer in this case, the nurse's or the doctor's.

All the heroes are not in the army, either. I saw one four years old, or thereabouts, standing by the trainside with his mother the other day. Dad was already in his seat and his kit was in the rack, and the train was about to bear him back to the front. The mother was tearless and brave, as every one of these English women are, but it was just a bit too much for the little four-year-old. He would look at his dad, then look away and choke and swallow, and catch the sob half-way between breast and throat. He would make believe to be interested in baggage trucks and passing people, and his hand worked convulsively in his mother's, but he simply could not look into that compartment and play the man, so he did not trust himself to look. I have seen no finer bravery and self-control in this brave island.

A tall, red-headed, freckled, angular young fellow whispered in my ear the other night as the men filed by to shake hands. The gold stripes were on his arm, two of them, though evidently he was fit again, built like a race horse. This is what he whispered:

"I had made up my mind, sir, to pop off" —vernacular for suicide—"I've been out to

France twice, and hit twice; now I'm about ready to go again, and I thought I couldn't stand it; but after this meeting I've decided to stick. Good-night!"

He hurried away in the crowd. You cannot tell by the faces of these men where the sensitive spots are. Some that look most unresponsive have the livest and most quivering hearts, so it never does to run the risk of a cold and formal greeting; better give every one of them a God bless you, and God be with you, or good luck, my son. You never know which one needs it most.

Now the last little story of this kind is the tale of a twilight in a little room back of a hut. The old man, leader of that hut, was seventy-five if a day. Twilights come late in England in the summertime, even as they come late in life, sometimes. We two were alone, and he brought out his little treasures, all he has. One was a photograph in a frame of a fair-haired, open faced, handsome youth. "My son," said he. Someone else told me the mother had died from the shock when the boy was killed. "My only son. Nothing was ever found of him, except the pocket of his tunic, and the Testament that was in it. See where the shell cut the book and marked this passage?"

Then he drew out his spectacles to examine it again. "You see, I only got this pocket and Testament last week." Sure enough, the fragment of shell had torn through and marked, "Henceforth there is laid up for you a crown of righteousness which the King, the righteous judge, shall give you." I saw those same words in the window of a great cathedral to-day, under the figure of Chinese Gordon, the most daring and most selfless Englishman in modern history.

It was little that the shell should have marked this one particular passage or any one of a hundred others. The old man would have found something significant somewhere. He couldn't help it. It gave him comfort in the twilight alone with his treasures, alone. Absolutely alone in the world in his last years as he sought with the feeble remnant of his days to lend aid to other people's boys, he who no longer had a boy of his own.

It is not all so dark, however, for many go through unscathed. I wish, for instance, I could give you a picture of the young flying corps sergeant, just going up for his lieutenancy, whom I talked with last night. This is considered the most dangerous but most enviable branch of the service. Smooth, slender and supple, he stood there, flicking his

puttees with his swagger stick; his little fore-and-aft cap that gives such a dare-devil look to these lads of the air, not hiding at all, but rather emphasizing, the sleek and shining brightness of his hair. He was scarcely twenty-one, yet he said, "I have been flying, sir, for two years and a half all up and down the lines and never had a scratch. Oh, yes, machine gun bullets have pierced my planes. I counted two hundred holes once. And one day a shell passed through the body of the plane and ripped off the back of my seat, but I scarcely knew it had happened, felt the plane lunge and vibrate, that was all. You see the shell was on its upward trajectory, and going very fast. I saw one of our boys fighting a Hun when his plane took fire. He knew he was gone, so he just took a plunge at the Hun and rammed him and both of them went whirling down in a stream of fire. They have taken me off the firing line, though I'm perfectly fit, and put me on home defense. They say that two years is long enough, though I have not lost my nerve and my heart is unaffected. I'm sorry, I wish I were back at the front. People in England don't take the war half seriously enough. I'd rather be out there."

XI

VERDUN IS MIGHTY

OF all places in France that I would have desired most to visit, the chiefest is Verdun. So it was with a sense of deep obligation that I learned we were going thither. No name will come out of this war more famous, no matter what other fields are yet to be fought.

As we drove up to the gates of the old fortress town, the colonel in command of the garrison stood there talking with the sentries. He acknowledged our salutes brusquely, as if thinking of something else. I learned in a few minutes that two shells had just fallen near these gates and the colonel had come out to see if we could get in.

Soon he joined us at the citadel; white-haired and white-mustached, he was, large and fatherly. He is one of those men who, at first sight, fill you with confidence, respect, admiration—I had almost said affection.

These old soldiers of France are impressive men, all of them, from the general in command, on down through the colonel in command of the citadel, to the majors who hold

the outlying forts. They are toughened, and hardened, swarthy veterans. Indeed, I do not know when I have encountered a body of men quite so impressive.

There is first of all, General Giulliamat, in command of the fourth army, whom we had met earlier in the day at headquarters. He it was who led the push at Verdun in the summer of 1917, which was so successful. He is a small, tight-knit, quiet-spoken man, evidently of nervous force and energy and of great kindliness and courtesy.

Then, besides our colonel, our immediate host, stationed in the city of Verdun, there are various majors, one in each of the outlying posts that ray out like the spokes of a fan from the handle at Verdun. These majors either came in to mess to visit, or we met them at their posts. Every one of them had had his wound—some of them several. I saw one French officer with six gold stripes, each indicating a wound received at a time different from the others. More than one of the staff of officers had lost a son in the war. The colonel himself had had frozen feet, along with twelve hundred men in his division, one night on the snowy, windy slopes about the impregnable town.

There are no civilians in Verdun; and precious few soldiers are seen upon its streets, as

the Boche keeps dropping his souvenirs into the place which he could not storm. The last day we were there, as we drove in to luncheon at the citadel, we had intended to go up on the hill above, to have a look at the cemetery there; but the Huns took a notion to shell us a while, and five "Jack Johnsons" came howling over and exploded around us. Yonder lay a fresh killed horse, somehow more pitiful, if possible, than a fresh killed man.

So the colonel changed his mind and took us to the safety of the citadel. During three days along this front we were under shell fire all the time; but our nights were spent in peace, as we slept ninety feet underground. Indeed, in that deep security, one could not even hear the smaller artillery.

I awoke at four o'clock one morning to hear the distant reverberations of shells overhead, and upon inquiry at breakfast learned, from a British major-general of artillery there on *liaison* duty, that nothing less than a three-twenty or three-forty could penetrate our ears in our fastness.

It is perfectly futile for the Boche to waste his ammunition upon Verdun, as a whole division could lodge in the citadel as safely as in their homes in the middle of France. Indeed, we all voted the citadel of Verdun as the best and safest hotel in Europe. If it

were in London it would soon make a fortune for its owners.

In other hotels there is always the possibility of injury from air raids; in this citadel none. We dined there one evening with thirteen at table, and scattered next morning toward all points of the front lines.

They were interesting occasions, those meals of ours in the officers' dining room deep underground. The ceiling alone, arched like a roof of the subway, or the tube, betrayed that we were underground.

Mirrors glittered upon the walls; old armor graced them; and huge models of the *Croix-de-guerre,* the *médaille militaire,* and the *Légion d' Honneur,* made of bayonets and bits of glittering ammunition, hung upon them. Silver and cut glass sparkled, wine and champagne bubbled, and great smoking tureens and platters betrayed no food shortage.

What was finer still than all of these was the confident, cheery, even if grim, determination written upon the faces of the French officers about that board. These are the men, who, in the darkest days of the war, for France, inscribed with their blood upon the banners of their country, that motto, born nobody knows how and destined never to die, *"On ne passe pas"* (they shall not pass).

What a change in the fortunes of France

since that motto came first through clenched teeth, out of parched dry mouths, rattled in the throat of the dying, came screaming through the air with the seventy-fives, and burned itself in fire and blood upon the memory of France! They did not pass; they shall never pass; they can no longer so much as try to pass; and France now knows that she is safe.

We journeyed out to the front lines from Verdun, journeyed as far as we could by motor, and then threaded the communication trenches the rest of the way. We stood in those old forts that protected the approaches to the town, until the walls of the forts, the embankments, the moats, became heaps of formless dust and dirt, sand and gravel. I never stood upon ground that thrilled me more than that at Fort Vaux, where, for days without water, without food, with swollen blackened tongues, in caverns of the earth filled with poisonous gases and the fumes of their own artillery, that little band, under the dauntless Major Reynal, stood to the end, loosed their last carrier-dove to their comrades behind, imploring aid which could not be sent them, received message after message begging them to hold on, until the mighty catacylsm burst open the earth in which they stood and engulfed them every one.

The last message Reynal received was from the commander-in-chief: "I create you commander of the Legion of Honor!"

In those communication trenches we paused at convenient points to listen to the interlacing shells overhead. Our own shells, departing, sang encouragingly above us, with a very different and far more inspiriting note than that of the German arrivals. We listened to these last approaching, a wicked sound they have, and then watched to see their effect upon their objectives behind and around us.

I had never been convinced, until an Italian officer recently proved it to me, that you never can hear the shell that gets you. The soldiers in all armies always seek to encourage new comers with this information. I had supposed it merely a superstition, kindly spread, to cheer up the timid; but I am sure now it is true. It is simply a matter of the comparative velocity of the shell and its sound. The shell travels faster than the sound; and the only shell you ever hear is really already past you, before you hear its whistle.

If it comes directly at you, it explodes before the sound of the whistling reaches you. In other words, you can't hear the whistle until after you are dead.

Nevertheless, old tried campaigners will dodge at the rush of a shell. I saw our

French captain, our cicerone, duck time and again; I never saw the colonel or any commander or soldier of Verdun duck. I have seen old war correspondents who have been in battles from Antwerp to Monte Santo, jump and duck as if it were their first time under fire.

We watched an aviation battle one afternoon from the trenches. The air was balmy, sunny and filled with the hum of planes, as it always is during favorable weather at the front, that sounded for all the world like the hum of a perplexed and wandering swarm of bees, or like an orchard in midsummer, where honey bees and bumble bees are drowsily luxuriating.

Suddenly, over our heads, came the sharp rat-a-tat of machine guns; and in the fleecy, golden mistiness above we saw the planes. Three of them there were, two evidently Hun from the darkness of their coloring, and one—what was he? Surely, he must be French, else why the firing. The colonel focused his glasses, as all of us did; then the colonel cried excitedly—it was the only time I ever saw him excited—*"il est Français!"* (He is French!)

The daring knight of the air was dashing at them, one against two! Again came the rattle of the guns; shrapnel was now dotting the sky all about them, from the archies,

or anti-aircraft guns, on either side down below.

The black puffs of German shrapnel encircled the Frenchman, and the white puffs of the French encircled the Boches. They ducked, dived, mounted, spat out streams of smoke behind, like noisome insects trying to poison the air in their wake, and wheeling past each other, let go from their noses the still more deadly darts of fire at each other.

We, below, held our breath while the lone Frenchman writhed and maneuvered up above. Rat-a-tat—r-r-r-rat-tat! Suddenly the tricolor plane pitched, fluttered like a dead leaf, came twisting and whirling slowly down; and we cried out. The colonel fairly shouted: *"O, mon dieu. Il est malade!"* (He is hurt.)

I had so often seen this winding, fluttering dive that I cried in response: "No. No. He is only maneuvering! He is only escaping!"

"Non, non!" cried the colonel. *"Malade! Il est malade!"* (He is hit. He is wounded. He is sick.)

I was reluctantly convinced; for the Frenchman, righting at last, a thousand feet or so above our heads, went brokenly, like a wild fowl wounded, toward the rear, and quickly faded from our sight.

Next day we saw his plane, lying like a huge broken butterfly, crushed by a storm, with

outspread, helpless wings, not far back of our own front lines. We were happy to learn, however, that the pilot was uninjured.

That same afternoon we saw a queer thing. A dark colored flier hung almost motionless above us, as if anchored there. We all made him out to be a Boche; for the Hun planes, with the black cross painted upon them give an effect of darkness, in the sky, as compared with the brighter allied planes. Other planes were higher up, for we could see the shrapnel, bursting, with long-time fuses, way above him in the sky. He seemed to pay no attention to all the furore in the air, but hung there, poised tranquilly.

Then, great Scott! All of a sudden we saw his planes flap like the wings of a bird—they were the wings of a bird—he was no airplane at all, or rather he was an airplane of the oldest and most perfect type. King of the air was he!

A huge brown and black master of all storms he was, that eagle. And in his royal self-possession he could afford to ignore the anger and the clashings of puny men trying to dispute with him the sovereignty of the blue! On my word, the gunfire and the planes had no more effect upon his highness than would have had so many sparrows or sky-larks.

They tell me this is true of most of the birds, which, unless actually hit, or their nests and perches destroyed, go on about their business of mating, singing, home-making, all unmindful of the crazy strife of man.

Under the hill, in a safe spot, comparatively, we paused to greet the Englishmen of a certain Red Cross station. Oh, yes, their post was pretty safe, they said. To be sure, the roads to the front lines were bad, were always bad, for Fritz had them all registered, and could plant his shells wherever he liked. Yes, their cars had all been hit. He who supposes all the danger, or even the worst danger, at times, to be in the front line trenches, does not know the front.

They looked it, too, those cars scarred and worn. Fritz was no respecter of cars of any kind. The Red Cross meant little or nothing to him. Haven't you seen the hospitals bombed by his planes? Yes, we had seen them; pitiful wrecks they were! As pitiful as the helpless men crushed in their helplessness and doubly done in.

Yes, there had formerly been American drivers on this post. In fact they had left only last week, and the English had taken over from them. Those Americans had left a record! The French say they are regular

devils, and afraid of nothing. These lads seem to love the sound of shellfire and a barrage; and the worse the road the more anxious seem these young daredevils to travel it. So said these Englishmen to us.

Yonder, beneath the hill, lay the cemetery with its two thousand or more of new graves, part of the price paid for the brilliant push of 1917. Yonder, still nearer Verdun, was the larger cemetery, where five thousand French sleep in an acre or so of ground. You would not believe men could lie so close together, or little wooden crosses stand so thick without elbowing each other.

And all these are only part, a very small part, of the vast army of Frenchmen who have given their lives to make good the motto, *"On ne passe pas."*

One must count by tens of thousands, scores of thousands, up into the hundreds of thousands before the tale is told. Yonder on the Somme I had seen a hillside where they told me two hundred thousand French had paid the uttermost farthing; but they are not greater in their numbers than this ghostly but glorious army that, at Verdun, now and forever, breathe and will continue to breathe, *"On ne passe pas"*—They shall not, they shall not pass!

XII

CHAMPAGNE AND CAMOUFLAGE

IT was on the Champagne front. We stood talking, a group of us, in the offices of a half-destroyed factory upon a hill. The Boche lines were a few kilometers away. We had just been looking down upon them. Thank God, we can look down upon them at most places now. We had been talking with the manager of the factory about his difficulties in keeping employees.

No wonder. Shells come there every day; he pointed out the spot where a man had been killed a few days before in the courtyard. He showed us the damage done on such a day and on such a day. Even rifle balls came whizzing through the court. A car drove into the yard while we talked and its hood was cut through in places by shrapnel.

Now, in the second story of the office building that evidently had once been so beautiful, but every room of which had received a shell, we were standing upon sandbags placed there to keep falling shells from dropping upon the heads of workmen beneath. I noticed that

where the sacks had contained bits of earth and seed the green shoots of grass were springing up. Perhaps there will be a lawn there in that office some day.

While we were talking thus, there came the sound of firing from our battery down the hillside, and our French captain cried: "Come, they have an objective," and we hurried after him and ran down to the battery.

It was carefully hidden in the cliff side, in caves and dens, and we approached it through trenches. It does not do for men to be seen coming and going to batteries, as this would reveal the location of guns to enemy observers. For this reason the commanders and men of artillery units do not care to receive visitors.

The visitors may come and stay an hour and nothing happen; then as soon as they are gone the enemy may receive the report of an airman, may select the little square on the map indicated by him and may drop a few shells into it by way of search for the battery.

So the poor fellows at the guns may suffer for the curiosity or friendliness of their visitors. Furthermore, the gunners do not like to open up their guns without a definite objective, just to show them off; as fire draws fire.

The shells of our seventy-fives, however,

were ripping across the road above our heads, sailing out of the wood and starting for some point on the plain three or four miles away; so we took the chance of being welcomed in the chambers where the dainty little guns live, and went ahead. We received a most cordial welcome, stood in the narrow little stall behind one of these thoroughbreds of ordnance, jammed our fingers into our ears and felt compressed air kick us in the face. Then I picked up one of the brass shells that fell automatically from the chamber and dropped it again quickly. When it had cooled I made its closer acquaintance, begged to adopt it and received a smiling assent. The empty shell will make a fine dinner gong.

We had scarcely departed, after leaving boxes of cigarettes for the *poilus,* when the inevitable happened; the enemy got to work upon that hill and we saw a great shell fall and throw up dust, smoke and earth from the factory where we had lately been. We hoped that none of our kind friends up there had paid for our visit. Then we remembered that the battery had had its objective anyhow and our consciences were at rest.

We were driving over screened roads all the time; that is, roads hung with matting, because they are easily discernible from the

sausage balloons of the enemy and are registered upon his charts for fire. Practically all the roads we drove over those days along the front are of this character, except those which run behind natural screens, like hills or woods.

And yet, exposed as these highways are and shot to pieces as are the villages along them, the peasant population is living quietly ahead as if nothing out of the ordinary were occurring and no shells or bombs were likely any time to drop upon their heads. For example, I observed, in one such village, groups of French soldiers taking their evening mess in the streets, while side by side with them were a group of little girls playing keep house under a cart, with dolls and a tiny bed.

Of all the sad sights along the French frontier, there is nothing sadder than the once beautiful city of Rheims. Somehow Arras did not tug at my heartstrings as did Rheims. I don't know why, unless it be that a few people were still trying to live and do business in Arras, while almost none are in Rheims. From a city of 150,000 it has gone down to less than five thousand. Besides, in Arras the numbers of British Tommies give life to the place, while in Rheims there is scarcely a footfall in the grass-grown streets.

Yet, again, the Cathedral of Arras is a ruin

out and out, while that of Rheims, where Joan saw the Dauphin crowned, has resisted the most pitiless onslaughts and still rears its proud walls and columns in perfect outline, although all its beauty of ornamentation has been stripped away. These old stones of the Twelfth Century are all dovetailed and mortised.

So that noble cathedral, refusing to bow its head before the storm, although all its windows, statuary, and painting had been withered from its walls as it were a beautiful woman whose draperies had been scorched by fire, pelted by hail and soaked by a deluge, seemed to me an image of fair France, whose beauty and richness had been despoiled by the barbarian, but whose spirit is unconquerable and proud. It was pitiful to see the piles of sandbags before the choice carvings of the lower façade, placed there in an attempt to preserve them.

Most pitiful of all was the great rose window to the west, with its incomparable colors in the evening light, gaping now in hollow caverns. It is all too sorrowful to think about; and there is absolutely no excuse for the Hun, since we ourselves had stood only half an hour before upon heights far greater than the towers of the cathedral; the French had ob-

servatories enough without using the twin spires of this precious church and so endangering it.

Anywhere in Rheims one can look down at his feet and see bits of shell and shrapnel bullets still remaining after all the masses of metal that passing soldiers have long ago picked up and carried away. We saw huge fragments, bases and fuses of shells piled up in the cathedral itself. Six hundred shells have fallen in the church and each of us carried away in his pocket some such souvenir of the unspeakable tragedy of Rheims.

There is nothing more beautiful on earth than this Champagne country, with its southern, sunny slopes covered with vines, with its women and children working feverishly to supply the places of the men in gathering the vintage. They say they will be able to get in all the grapes; and we saw wagon load after wagon load driven along the gently sloping roads by little boys, women, old men and an occasional soldier.

Crowning many of the crests of these hills, and clothing all the northern slopes of them, are deep forests, where the wild boar was hunted in the days of Cæsar and Charlemagne, and is hunted to-day, or would be, if men were not too busy hunting each other.

The courtly captain of the staff, who conducted us on this tour of the Champagne and Verdun fronts, was, before the war, a gentleman of leisure and an ardent sportsman. When, years ago, he retired from active service in the army, he told me he hunted in various parts of the world for much of his time; and for the rest, "Ah, well," said he, "there was Paris—and art—and music!" And his face glowed.

Once I said to him: "This is a most beautiful country. It is worth fighting for!"

I never heard a man speak with deeper conviction and more vibrant enthusiasm when he made this reply:

"Ah, yes! France has everything heart can desire. It is washed by three seas. It has the cool north and the warm south, mountain and plain. It has color, light, soft rain; the best wines in the world. It knows how to live, to create literature, music, art; it loves the beautiful; its people are gentle, tender, kind, but brave. Yes, it is worth fighting for."

Then another time, when I expressed some astonishment and admiration over the fact that France had loaned of her strength to Italy in these days, after all these years of exhausting war, he answered:

"Do you remember that picture of Sir Ed-

ward Landseer's, in which the old hound that everybody thought was worn out clutches at the throat of the stag at bay? Do you remember the title of that picture: 'There's Life in the Old Dog Yet'?"

Germany never made a greater mistake than when she thought France defenseless, unless it was when she thought Britain decadent and America negligible. These three mistakes form a necklace of millstones round the throat of the Prussian military autocracy; they will drown the beast deeper than the Lusitania.

But of all the inspiring exhibitions of this war there is none more chivalrous, more courageous, more hopeful for democracy on earth than that of France, invaded, shelled, bombed, burned—like the glorious cathedral of Jeanne d'Arc at Rheims—a people loving peace and seeking peace and pursuing peace, set upon by a ruthless savage war power, yet rising unshaken, invincible, wounded, but fair and strong. *"On ne passe pas!* (they shall not pass)"—the immortal motto of Verdun, are the words done in blood from the thorns upon her brow, that speak the spirit of France.

XIII

THE RED TRIANGLE OF WAR

THERE came a day when I had to do with a very different red triangle from that with which I had been concerned all summer. This was the red triangle of war and destruction, fire and flaming sword, the triangle from which the German fell back to the Hindenburg line, leaving to beautiful France the heritage of blackened, dismantled, unrestorable cities, towns and villages.

One hundred and fifty kilometers our speedometer registered when we had threaded in and out among these ruins of a once prosperous, happy and rich country; had looked down into Saint Quentin and the German lines and had returned to the French general headquarters at night.

Sherman in his march to the sea never dreamed of destruction like that. The only parallel I have seen is the total abolition of Wytschaete, at Messines Ridge, and that was the result of bombardment, not of deliberate dynamiting and burning. It is one thing for

a town to be wiped out between the hammer and the anvil of two opposing armies and another for it to suffer no bullet wound, but only bombs.

We were in Joan of Arc's country; and we met a little Joan of to-day. Even her name was Jeanne; and she sat on my knee, gazed a while at the photo of a little American lad then gravely kissed him and smiled the quietest, most adorable of smiles into my face. Her eyes were deep and dark with the mystery of a childhood spent between the waves of two great armies; her features were perfect, beautiful to a degree; and, later, when I stood in Joan's chapel, where she took the holy communion in armor before setting off to Orleans, the child's face was reflected to me in the white marble of Joan's effigy. For months this little girl's home had been in the hands of the Hun, and now it was left to her desolate.

A Spanish senator was of our party, a quick moving, springy, courtly gentleman of Andalusia, with his Sancho Panza by his side, his secretary. They seemed to me strange modern remnants of a day when their own land took the lead in all such titanic struggles as this. Not being able to speak their tongue, nor to understand much of their

French, I could not pierce deeply into their state of mind; but we stood side by side at general headquarters, and gazed upon the beautiful structure that had often held the greatest warrior of all time—Napoleon—and each thought our own thoughts. Strange how much less one hears the name of Napoleon these days in France, than ever before. After all, even his battles have paled into comparative insignificance.

We went mile after mile over roads, once the most perfect in the world, now broken and patched, from town to town and village to village, whose names have been pathetically prominent in the dispatches. Noyon, Chauny, Ham, Roye, Lassigny. One can understand a part of the destruction as intended to deprive the French of their resources; for example, the wilderness of blackened, twisted iron in what were once the factories, sugar factories, mirror factories and the like. But one cannot understand the destruction of cathedrals, too far from the Hindenburg line to serve as observatories.

We stepped into what was left of one beautiful church. Designedly or not, a bit of the roof was left over the altar, the choir and the organ console; and on the door was printed a list of stated services. We heard the organ

rolling and found a *poilu* with bowed head and closed eyes playing in deep-throated minor tones the sorrows of the souls of men. All the metal of the great pipes had been stripped away by the Boche to supply his need of copper, and the organ itself, under the roofless portion of the ruined transept grinned hollow and black as a skull. I could scarcely bear the music of desolation, and the bowed head of France.

There were acres and acres of interlaced barbed wire in the fields along all our roads, miles and miles of trenches that had been first lines, second lines, transverse and communication systems. It seemed horribly confused, and yet once it was all part of a definite plan. Poppies, dog daisies, wild flowers and weeds of all kinds were now taking these trenches gently and peacefully and covering up, as if ashamed, the violent toil of men.

Sometimes the trenches were on each side of our road, and here the foes had faced each other across thirty yards of paved No Man's Land. Again the ditches would coil and uncoil through a village or group of farmhouses, and once the yawning serpent writhed into the cellar windows of a mansion and out on the other side. Châteaux that had once been beautiful, well nigh perfect, crowning lovely

wooded heights, now stood, if they could be said to stand, so lamely did they lean and totter, blackened, windowless, shattered.

One can understand the destruction of forest trees for lumbering purposes; but when giants of forty years are thrown down and left to rot, and when fruit trees are girdled, that could not have borne for some years to come, so young were they, one wonders whether any plan except utter ruthlessness lay back of it all. The towns may be rebuilt—though it would be easier to begin elsewhere and build all over anew—but the trees cannot be replaced under two generations. And as for the lives of the young girls, the young mothers, the youths, driven away into practical slavery, and starved into debauchery and prostitution, they can never be restored except somewhere in a beyond.

Most of this red triangle was never fought over. There are few wooden crosses to tell the tale of struggle between man and man. It was simply wrecked, burned, crimsoned with the unshed blood of hearts bleeding internally; and how the heart of France drips, drips, drips! With the sad-eyed, feature-drawn captain beside me, a man who had spent two years and nine months in trench and firing line, since the sixth of August, 1914, and,

unwounded outwardly, but physically somewhat broken, had been taken out for lighter staff duties, I could do nothing but murmur: *"Je ne comprend pas*—I cannot understand." He grimly muttered in reply: *"Non! Non! Je ne comprend pas."*

We paused at Prince Eitel Friedrich's pleasure ground—the lodge he established and held for months and even years, for champagne parties, cards and carousals. And I recalled what I had been told in the Isle of Wight, where this young princeling had been a-pleasuring when the war came on. He was suddenly called home, near the end of July, 1914. Somebody knew what was coming. The young barbarian, according to the natives of the isle, smashed up the furniture in his rooms, tore the hangings, soiled the linens and upholsteries in unspeakable ways, and stole away very unlike the Arabs. There are other such tales told of the Hohenzollerns in Europe; they seem to have this sort of way about them.

Standing near the prince's famous *abris,* or dug-out, we could see the Saint Quentin Cathedral clearly; and we could see the shells falling and exploding in the ground between. Then we passed into the zone of fire. Here everything was covered with camouflage.

Every cameon or motor truck, every tent, every camp object, was ringstreaked with paint to look like the ground. The roads, at exposed points were, of course, hung with screens of grass or colored fibers to hide passing motors and men from enemy eyes. We knew now we could be reached at any time by German fire.

The *poilu,* however, went about in this realm of fire, with less apparent care for his safety than Tommy Atkins; for, whereas, the latter always dons his steel helmet and keeps his gas protector handy when near the line, the former comes and goes, and even walks along the roads and fields in his cap. We saw engineers building telephone lines—and such neat, natty work they were doing, too, within three or four miles of the German lines —entirely without helmets. Our car gathered a ground telephone wire around its front axle at one place and ran away with it. Signal corps men at the instrument must have been startled. Our chauffeur took his wire cutters and clipped it calmly and left the end to be found by the searching engineers.

While this delay took place, I heard the hum of planes and stepped out of the car to look up. There he was, the little silver insect; he must have been sixteen thousand

feet above us. I was trying to make him out, when he darted into a cloud and disappeared. Then came two planes that I knew were French, lower down, but climbing, and I was satisfied of the nationality of the first one. He must have borne the black cross, while the two with the tri-color circles must have been after him.

Closer and closer we came to the lines, until we dismounted at last and took the rest of the way afoot. Through fields of clover, along hedge rows, over ditches, we made our way about a mile up the ridge until we crept into a well concealed outlook and could gaze straight away down to the lines and the beleaguered city beneath. It was a quiet day, although some artillery activity was going on. Our own guns were playing on each side of us and occasionally some of our "big stuff" went rumbling like a train of cars over our heads. We could hear the Boche gun speak, wait a few minutes and then hear the explosion of the shell to right or left. One quickly gets accustomed to the difference in language of the batteries, friend or foe.

Just beside us, on the hillside, *poilus* were quietly digging and building. We asked them what they were engaged upon, another observatory? No, it was a telephone station.

Then we retraced our steps and thought of the city lying yonder that the French could, at any moment, blow to kingdom come, and capture. Only they prefer, if possible, to spare its beauty; and squeeze the Boche out.

On the route that we passed was the town where Miss Morgan was faithfully at work, and had been for many months, ministering to the hungry, needy, refugee people of the district. We saw ambulances, too, with the Stars and Stripes upon them, and young Americans in the drivers' seats.

At one point we passed a single grave—McConnell's it was—within ten feet of the roadside. It will ever be a sacred spot to French and Americans alike. The tricolor circle of the French air service marks it; flowers are kept fresh on it; the flags of both nations float in the winds above it. It is the lovely resting place of a man who fought, alone in the clouds, fell to his death alone, resolutely went to his great renunciation like him who trod the wine press alone; but who, to-day, please God, is not alone, but is with the hundreds of the heroic who confer together over the feeble little struggles of that distant little planet where once they lived and strove.

XIV

WITH THE *POILU* AND HIS OFFICER

FRENCH officers are, most of them, men of education and refinement. Some notable literature is coming out of the trenches.

For example, we spent a couple of days in the company of a lieutenant, with gray streaked beard, full lips and eye-glasses, and a surprised, inquiring manner, who seemed to us all quite childlike and naïve. When we bade him good-by he gave each of us a copy of his book, "Les Bienfaits de la Guerre," which showed not only an unusual and original mastery of the French tongue, but also a wealth of experience drawn from the front line trenches and the nearness of death.

Before reading his book he struck me as a gold laced staff officer who had probably never smelt powder nearer than a mile and a half. After reading I knew that his soft, white hands had known the grime and the slime, the battle and the blood of the life struggle of France.

The captain who had us in charge, a most courtly officer, to whom I have alluded in another chapter as a gentleman of wealth, leisure and sportsmanship, we learned afterwards, was a nobleman of an old line. A baron he was; but no titles are worn by French officers unless their grade is general or higher.

He told us also that another captain with whom we had been associated was, in civil life, Count So-and-so. Our captain was a graduate of the West Point of France, had served a number of years, and was retired when the war broke out. He immediately volunteered, but was not called in time to be in the battle of the Marne.

"Being among the first to volunteer," he smiled, "my papers were no doubt near the bottom of the pile, and so, near the last to be reached."

And here he put his finger on the weakness of democracies—ours as well as his—in matters of administration. While he seemed far from criticizing anybody or any system, we learned afterwards that he is a royalist and, with others of his class, would like to see the throne re-established in France, and the Bourbons upon it.

Other officers we met,—for example, the colonel commanding Verdun,—who seemed to

us like gruff, matter-of-fact American business men; others, like the officers of *chasseurs,* with their natty blue uniforms and slender suppleness, recalled the heroes of Dumas and the leaders surrounding Napoleon. Still others, like the fighting majors in charge of the defenses of Verdun, were rough, hairy fellows, with dark faces, lined and scarred, who looked as if they might be the product of the peasantry of France, risen by sheer force and devotion and courage to their stations of command.

There may be officers in the French army, as there are in all armies, who remain behind in safety and send their men up to the lines of fire and of death; but they were not the type of men we met in the front lines at Verdun.

Furthermore, though there are those who complain of official France, the bunglesome administration, the interminable red tape, I was not one of those who suffered any great inconvenience from these obstacles to progress. I found more intricacies in our own American administration than in that of France.

The only insolence or even gruffness that I encountered in French bureaus was at the hands of little underlings, clerks, factotums. It is always so, in every nation.

The only thing to do is to elbow them aside, get to the men higher up; and in France, at least, you can meet with unfailing courtesy. You cannot always get what you want for the first asking; but "no" in France does not mean so much as in England.

You can ask in a different way; you can come back on the morrow with the same request made from a different angle; you can suavely insist; and, like the judge who dealt with the importunate widow, they give you what you want to get rid of you.

Undoubtedly official France likes to write things. There are more blanks to be filled up, more particulars to be given, more dates, figures, ages, pounds-weight, meters-height, to be registered, more photographs of yourself to furnish, than in any country in Europe.

Some American ambulance drivers have complained to me that they have brought in severely wounded men to the *postes de secours,* who had to lie and wait until official France could write down in blank forms all about them, before their wounds could be dressed. Others have denied the charge. Anyway, it is altogether in character with French administration that pads and plenty of pads must be much written upon in all emergencies.

Another way to get what you want from a Frenchman is to tell him all about yourself, your wife, your children, your mother-in-law, your hopes, and aspirations. Not being a silent race themselves, they do not appreciate silence and reticence on the part of others. They are vitally interested in everything that concerns you. Once get their interest thoroughly enlisted and they will find some way through the mazes of official waitings and tabulations.

Is this a childlike characteristic? If so, it is an admirable one. It is the bond of human interest. Especially is it true of the Frenchman, as indeed it is to a degree of everybody else, that if he has once done you a favor he is your friend forever, looks upon you as his property and his very special charge. This is, after all—is it not?—a testimony to the inherent kindness of the human race, and its desire to serve.

Now to hark back to the French soldier. He is called the *poilu,* the hairy one. I think he is rightly called. Some say the reference is to his Samsonic strength; others to his usually unkempt condition. Whichever is the true interpretation, he is a *poilu.*

He certainly is not so neat, clean shaven, so anxious for shined buttons and polished

boots as Tommy Atkins. Neither is the American Sammy. Nobody can approach Tommy in these regards. The faded blue of the French private soldier lends to the air of negligence that enfolds his personality. Then when he is wounded, the old uniform adds to the pathos of his appearance.

I never can forget the sight, by one of the shell-swept roads of Verdun, when I encountered two "walking wounded," in charge of a single Red Cross man. One of the wounded men could seemingly go no further; or else his bandages had slipped. He was lying on the grass beyond the *camouflage* of the road along which we drove.

The Red Cross man was bending over him ministering to him. It was the other *poilu,* however, who looked most pitiful. He stood at an opening in the *camouflage,* blinded, and with red bandages across his eyes, his head bowed already in the patient helplessness of the blind.

Of course we wanted to stop and help the little group, but of course the exigencies of war would not permit. How much the colonel was moved by the sight, or how much he had been calloused by the accustomed character of it, I could not tell, as I glanced at his granite face; but certain it is, he did not turn his

head nor stop the car; to pause would have been only to draw fire.

The *poilus* are drawn from all classes of the people, though naturally they are mostly from the common folks, since God made so many of them. There are a few from among scholars, artists and musicians; but, for the most part, they are peasant farmers, Paris apaches, Lille and Lens miners and factory operatives. They have the common characteristics of the common soldiers in all armies; the grumbling at their supply trains, and cooks, the cursing of the powers that grip them in the inexorable mailed hand of war, the living only for letters and leave, the singing of old songs and the crazed dash to death over the top.

During the long, tedious hours of waiting in trench or garrison or hospital the *poilu* takes refuge in the fashioning of little objects for sale as souvenirs of the war. He will take a shell casing of brass or an old cartridge or any bit of metal that comes his way and make from it the most wonderful cigar lighters or *bricquets;* a bit of flint and a small saw-toothed wheel of steel, a few drops of benzine essence and a little wick and the instrument is made. Everybody wants one made by a *poilu.*

Then there are the aluminum buttons of the Boche. These are curiously wrought into finger rings, sometimes with a copper or brass seal; and everybody in France or near France is wearing one of these. There are also the big brasses of the seventy-fives, which are polished and then chased in patterns, to form vases for flowers or gongs for the dining room.

All these things, not to mention the knitted oddities or commodities of wool, zephyr or silk, which soldiers of all nations make to while away their hours of idleness and to add to their revenues; but the *poilu* is the most ingenious of any soldier I have seen in these pursuits. In fact, the French are an inventive race.

Many soldiers till the soil, gather the crops for the vintage, work in the factories back of the lines in their rest days away from the front. We visited a certain château in the Champagne country with a world-famous name, where one hundred and twenty feet under ground a large force of soldiers and women were at work in the wine vaults, turning the bottles to clear the champagne of sediment, corking and uncorking the valuable stuff to bring it to its golden perfection.

Twelve million quarts, they told us, were

ripening in these cavernous corridors, only three kilometers, less than two miles, from the German first lines. Shells fall all around and upon the château itself, all the time; even rifle balls whistle over it. In the yard a man was killed last week.

Two thousand bottles of champagne were smashed here two days ago by a shell; yet four thousand bottles a week are exported steadily to America, England, Russia. When the Hun overran this country and took this château, he extracted only a thousand bottles from the vaults, though there are miles and miles of them. Doubtless he was afraid he himself might be bottled if he penetrated too far underground.

No wonder the manager has difficulty in holding his employees; for while they are safe by day, when at work, they can find no safe place to live by night, under constant fire. We had scarcely driven away from the place when, over our shoulders we saw the black débris and smoke go up from a "Jack Johnson" that fell in the premises. Hundreds of *poilus* are quartered in the wine vaults. We saw their beds, and we saw the men themselves, and we smelled their smell.

Then we drove away to a town where one of the noblest cathedrals in the world stands,

a wreck inside and out. Not a foot of the square before it but is littered with the fragments of shell. Iron shards are as the sand upon the shore. All over the floor of the church itself, bits of shrapnel, bullets, shell fuses are strewn among the débris; and, most pitiful it was to see old decrepit workmen searching the floors for the pieces of priceless glass and seeking to restore them to the leads spread out upon benches under the gaping nave.

How any soul in France can cry "Peace, peace," with her beauty all ravaged, her richness despoiled, her head bowed in the ashes and the dust, is more than I, for one, can understand. Nothing but the humiliated expulsion of the Hun can ever even half atone, let alone restore. Yet even in France are to be found some false friends of France, as in other nations, too, who cry "Peace, peace, when there is no peace!"

These are only the few in France, please God. The great French people as a whole, though the hoarse voice rattles huskily in battle-parched throats, cries for no peace without victory, no rest until assurance of age-long peace, no surcease for this generation until the next and the next and the next are all safe from the ravages of the Hun.

The French front does not give you the impression of being so thickly strewn with men and convoys and multifarious life as do the British and Italian fronts. For thirty miles or so back of the lines on these two others there curls a very swollen, writhing serpent of human effort, like a cordon of power.

The blue line of France seems thinner, but doubtless the impression is due only to different methods of transportation and underground living. And yet it would not be strange if it were true, for France has thus far borne most of the brunt of the war. It is wonderful to see how she has kept up her roads. She has sent away to her far Eastern posssions for aid, and to-day you can see along all these white ways the almond eyes of the Mongols looking slantwise from beneath steel helmets.

Some still wear their Oriental blouses or robes, and some their queer, wide, cane hats. They are not fighters, these mild, little men, but they are good hewers of wood and drawers of water and menders of roads for the *poilu* to travel upon, who is himself a "fighter right." I saw some of the Mongolians at work even in the airdromes, grooming the falcons of the fight.

With all his gruffness the French soldier is a tender and romantic fellow. The memory of his women supports him. The women of France have been perfectly fine. To be sure, they are not so much employed in factories as English women.

One French officer remarked: "Our women are made to love, not to work." Yet it is the women of France who have tilled the ground and kept the home fires burning.

A factory manager in Italy told me they could not, in that country, employ women to any great extent.

"For," said he, "the men and the women would flirt all the time."

Indeed, among the few women I saw in Italian factories, his words were justified.

It is of a woman, though, that the *poilu* thinks and speaks in his hour of need. He calls upon a woman when wounded, not usually his wife or sweetheart, but a friend more tried than either. His semi-conscious cry is for *"Maman, Maman."* Indeed this seems true of all men. I heard an English soldier, struck by an air bomb, in a town where I was one day, as he was borne away unconscious, groaning: "Mother, oh, mother!"

XV

THE AIRMAN

IF D'Artagnan were alive in France to-day he would not be in the Chasseurs, gallant and dashing as they are. Neither would he be in the Foreign Legion, that terrible body of men who give no quarter nor take any, and who have dwindled from some sixty thousand to less than eight thousand; who set out at each attack to collect some particular souvenir from the enemy—now it is helmets, now bayonets, now buttons; the last time it was officers' field glasses, a very good type of souvenir, indeed.

Nor would D'Artagnan have stood behind that aristocratic little gun, the seventy-five, the thoroughbred of the artillery. Athos, Porthos and the rest, they might have been zouaves, *Chasseurs à pied,* light field artillerymen, bombers or bayonet pliers, but not D'Artagnan. If he were alive to-day he would undoubtedly be an airman. He could be nothing else and nothing less.

The airman is the adventurer, the explorer, the nonpariel of the modern army. When he

is in Paris on leave, in London at the theater, in Milan at the Arcade, everybody turns around to observe him. When you mention that So-and-So is in aviation, other soldiers say:

"Ah, that is the service! If only my eyes —or if my heart——"

There is a spell about the airman. The mystery of a new element and the mastery of it is woven around him. When you see him strolling along in the aristocratic way he cannot help but have with his perfect nerves, his perfect respiration, his perfect heart and his 100 per cent of eye-sight, hearing, touch and all the senses, he seems to tread the earth only with the tips of winged feet, like Mercury. Of course D'Artagnan, if alive, would be a flier.

To tell the truth, I believe that he is alive. I believe I saw him, not once nor twice. I saw him in command of the great first flying school of France, where all the airmen of that nation go for their elementary training. I watched him out of the corner of my eye as he walked beside me to the great stalls where the racers of the air are kept and groomed.

I noted the wound stripes on his arm, the quick gestures with which he tapped his boots with his swagger stick; I watched his bright

black eyes darting from side to side over his beaklike nose—I have seen a number of airmen with noses like hawks. And more than once I thought of those lithe little fellows who used to be so famous in Kentucky, because they took their lives in their hands every time they put on colors and mounted the bony racers, and I remembered one, also, that I had seen years ago as he lay in the dust of the track, his bones broken, his head thrown back, his eyes closed.

I saw D'Artagnan, too, not far behind the lines of Verdun. He was commandant of the artillery observers' section, and he looked like a hundred-yard man at Yale—except that he was probably 26— and wore two little black streaks, one on each side of his upper lip.

I saw him, too, in England, doing the fluttering leaf dive, his plane falling helpless, circling and winding, hundreds of feet down, only to right itself and climb again, doing leap after leap, flying upside down for minutes on end. I heard him tell calmly that seven men had lost their lives learning to fly at this field last week, two this week so far, five the week before last.

I talked with him, too, in a London hotel, just back from the front, where his machine had been repeatedly riddled, the back of his

seat carried away by a shell, and when I asked him what advice he would give to a young airman, for his care of himself, he replied: "Tell him not to try any tricks under a thousand feet from the ground, and he will be quite all right."

Another bit of advice from an old flier to a new one is: "Never fly out of your turn. If there is a call to fill some other fellow's time, let the next man in order take it." Nor is this advice based solely upon superstition. There is good psychology back of it, for he explained: "If you are out of your turn you no more than get up into the air than you begin to say to yourself: 'This is not my turn, now I wonder if I am going to get it, when I should not?' and in spite of yourself you will become obsessed by the thought and lose coolness and efficiency. You may become reckless and desperate."

I saw the same gallant, adventurous spirit of D'Artagnan in Italy in the young marquis who made the record flight to London a few days later. I stood with him beside the wonderful car in which he was to make the trial, and looked her over. He touched her reverently with his hand and looked into my eyes and smiled, for this was the only way we could converse.

I met, also, the dauntless young Italian captain who had made the altitude record of over 23,000 feet, a week or two ago, with an observer. He had reached 25,000 feet alone before that; but of course it could not be of record.

Then if ever I saw D'Artagnan in the flesh, it was at dinner in Milan, with Signor Caproni, "Engineer" Caproni, they all call him, the leading inventor in aviation in Italy whose name is a household word. Caproni had just told me the story of this Roman young captain, at the end of the table; how he had been the first to bomb Pola, the Austrian submarine base on the Adriatic; how the government had said it was impossible to bomb Pola, and the commands were that no airman should attempt to reach Pola; how this Roman captain had violated the commands, had gone off one night all alone, had done the thing that bureaucracy had said was impossible; and how the Austrian communique next day had borne witness to the feat.

"The result?" I asked.

The result was two months' imprisonment for the captain and his removal from aviation to the cavalry, which has little or nothing to do.

The captain knew that Signor Caproni was

telling me the story, for he glanced over once and smiled. Then, being unable to tell him what I thought of him, and his achievement, and bureaucracy in all countries and ages, I just lifted my glass to him and pledged him.

After all, I think I told him; for he soon remarked to a neighbor, and the remark was translated for me, that the only way to win a war was to have no government behind it. He was different from other airmen; he was heavier about the jaw, thicker in the neck and nose, and sternly determined in the mouth.

I delighted in hearing him talk, for his voice was deep, strong, coarse, but soft and low. Perhaps you believe that a contradiction, but you should have heard the voice. I could imagine him in a purple bordered tunic and gold laced sandals on the Via Sacra, or in greaves and plumed helmet on the plains of Philippi.

At the same table that night sat a young fair-haired lieutenant—there are many fair-haired and blue-eyed Italians—who had been over Pola many times since the impossible became possible, and he smiled at our colloquy. I observed that his eyes were very bloodshot, and I knew it was not from drink. Italians are abstemious.

Perhaps, however, the most adventurous

spirit at that board was the engineer himself, Caproni. Not merely during this war, but for the last eight or nine years has this young dreamer been flying and building fliers. Since his country went to war with the central powers, he has cherished a plan for killing the war, which he has dinned into the ears of officialdom, until at last they are beginning to listen. At first his friends said:

"Caproni, you are a fool, a dreamer. You are a professorial sort of being."

To-day they have come his way, and he cannot work fast enough to help the allied governments carry out his plan. It is very simple, this plan, as he explained it to me:

"To win the war, we must have an overwhelming superiority in artillery and munitions. To accomplish that we must not merely increase our own stock, we must diminish the enemy's. If we can demolish his sources of supply, and interrupt his flow of guns and shells, even for a short time, a few weeks, we can break his lines.

"We know where his factories are, just as we know where his submarine bases are. How can we reach and disorganize them? With heavy planes in the air, carrying large supplies of bombs."

Certainly; plain as the beak on a birdman's

face! That is the way the war will finish. D'Artagnan will do it in the air. It is a matter of mathematics.

War is an industry. The man who has the most planes will win the war. Everybody sees it now, and the governments, our own among them, are buying Caproni's big biplanes and triplanes, triple engined, 600-horsepower, capable of carrying three men and a ton or so of explosives and of coming home with one engine disabled or two engines disabled.

Furthermore, other nations are building the same sort of planes and adopting Caproni's idea. Italy cannot meet the demand for planes. She cannot get the raw materials, which she must import. The ships are not sailing fast enough for Italy. The world, however, is moving fast enough Caproni's way, and the patrician face of this young engineer of thirty-four or thirty-five wears the quiet smile of the man who has, with the aid of circumstances, conquered the stubbornness of governments; and his big, dark eyes look away absently, as if dreaming still more for the future.

"Oh, yes, it can be done," he said to me. "And after the war, when we have time, it will be done. It will take about four stages to cross the Atlantic; the first from Milan to

Portugal, the second to the Azores, the third to New Iceland, the fourth to New York. We are preparing for it now. The triplane will do it with mail and passengers."

At the time I thought I would look up "New Iceland." I supposed my geography was at fault. I think now it was his English. He could not have meant Iceland, nor Newfoundland. I think he was feeling for some name in the Bermudas. At all events, the four stages will be found, and the "nations' airy navies, grappling in the central blue," will give way to the "argosies of magic sails, pilots of the purple twilight dropping down with costly bales."

Neither need it be so expensive a mode of travel, nor take many years to develop. Before I die I expect to sail to Europe high over the waves of the Atlantic, where seasickness cannot corrupt, nor censorship officials break through and steal my notes and photographs, as they did the other day.

Italy began this war, as we have done, practically without knowledge of aviation. To-day she holds the Austrian airmen in the hollow of her hand, is making airships for us and for England, and is teaching some hundreds of our young Americans to fly. She has inventive genius.

I saw Marconi, one day, driving along the streets of Turin, looking very young and handsome in his naval uniform. Italy has also administrative genius to a degree that has astonished the world. She has made good in this war, and not least in aviation.

Among all these nations it is taken for granted that the young American boy who undertakes to fly will succeed. Quite a percentage of their own young men, it seems, could never learn, and they try to weed out these by rigid nerve tests and the like. But the sports and the outdoor life of the American lad, like those of the English, only to a greater degree, seem to fit him for flying.

In France they do not take an American through the slow degrees of patient training through which they take their own lads. They, in a way, toss him up into the air and let him try his wings. The English are inclined to do the same with their own boys, and one wonders if this is not the reason for so many casualties in British flying schools.

The French and the Italians are very careful in their training of new fliers; every school machine is fitted with two sets of controls, identical, and coupled; every move of the teacher is felt and imitated by the pupil through a long continued course. The com-

manders of these stations informed me that they very seldom have accidents.

The physical examinations, too, have eliminated many of the unfit and reduced casualties. The candidates are tested not only as to soundness of eyes, ears, heart, lungs, all the evident neccessities, but also as to mental reactions, sense of location, nerve control.

For example, they are placed upon a revolving table, blindfolded, whirled around several times and asked to indicate the points of the compass. Water is poured in the ears to test the resistance of the drums. They stand barefoot on one leg and are told to hop backwards along a line.

They perform various other ludicrous stunts in a state of nudity. They consider that much of this is all poppycock; but if it saves the lives of a few lads here and there it is well worth while. To be sure, that ace of aces, Guynemer—the French call an airman an ace when he has brought down five of the enemy—could stand none of these tests.

He was physically unfit, according to all the rules. He was a consumptive, weighed less than a hundred pounds, and knew he could only live a year or two at best. He accounted for more than fifty Hun planes, just because

he was a man in ten million and was selling the fag-end of his life as dearly as might be.

What a shudder went up over France—yes, over allied Europe the other day when he went down. I heard the news several days before it was printed, from our own airmen in Paris; but we could not believe it, so often had the rumor of the terrible little man's death gone out. His father and mother do not believe it yet, but are waiting for him in the little home in Compiegne, to which he used always to fly when he came back from the front, like a bird to his mountain.

Many other fathers and mothers there are who will wait and wait in vain. How much better, though, for Guynemer! He was the most real D'Artagnan of them all.

America is going into aviation in earnest. I could tell many things about orders placed by our government in foreign factories; about many square miles of territory acquired for fields and 'dromes; about the training places of many of our lads in allied lands; but these things are best left undiscussed.

XVI

UP IN A BIPLANE

MY first flight in an airplane came quite by accident, as so many good things in life seem to have a way of doing. I had long been seeking such an opportunity, and once or twice it had been offered me; but the exigencies of work and other engagements had always prevented. Now this apparent accident carries with it some, to me, very interesting facts.

The Italian officer is the most courtly military man in Europe, and the most kindly. Nobody so punctilious in etiquette as he; nobody so careful of his appearance, his ways and his manners.

If he enters a railway carriage, a restaurant, or any public place, he stands by the door and salutes all the occupants. If a high officer enters a public room where a number of other officers are sitting they all arise and stand at attention. If someone enters with a woman, every man arises, no matter whether he is in the midst of soup or dessert, and stands until the woman is seated. It requires a great deal

of watchfulness and agility on the part of a stranger to keep up with these forms, although it all seems easy and second nature to the courteous Italians.

Furthermore, these southern men of Europe have a genius for administration and for getting things smoothly done. The rest of official Europe is bound hand and foot with red tape; but if red tape gets in the way of Italian officers, so much the worse for the red tape.

I found this out on this wise: I was tired from a long journey and feeling a bit ill. I decided, therefore, to drop off at a wayside city and rest; besides, I had heard it was a beautiful and interesting city and possessed certain munition and airplane factories and airdromes. I drove to the hotel in the middle of the afternoon and went to bed, telling the porter meantime to call up the office of the air commandant and make an appointment for me next day.

Refreshed by an afternoon and night of rest, I went next morning to see the commandant. He was very sorry, but I must have authorization from Rome or from the *commando supremo,* the headquarters of the army, before I could enter the factories or the air sheds. I had expected it to be so, and not greatly disappointed, thought swiftly of

visiting the museum of the town, like tourists in happier days. So I gathered up my credentials, assured the commandant that I appreciated his courtesy, and was about to back out of the office, doing plenty of bowing on the way.

"Stop," said the interpreter, for we talked through a medium. "The colonel says that regulations are positive and that he must have a permission from the headquarters before admitting visitors; but as you are on your way to the *commando supremo,* if you will promise him to apply for a permission when you get there he will let you go into the factories and 'dromes right now!"

I call that a masterly way to handle red tape. I readily gave the promise and later executed it, too, to the letter.

Then was summoned a young lieutenant who spoke English, then a motor car, and then followed the round of the factories and air sheds, where I saw the newest types of Italian cars, some of which have not even been heralded yet, met the men whose names have become famous through their engines; certain great fliers, whose achievements the press has since been trumpeting; and examined planes which have established records of late. I was going on to another city that afternoon and

as the young officer put me down at my hotel he said:

"You will find someone to meet you there."

I thought no more about the remark and ambled out of the station at the second city, looking for a taxi, but suddenly, just out of the door, a young, black mustached Apollo came close up to me and saluted as if I were a field marshal.

Then he welcomed me, conducted me to a military car, waiting, bowed me in and drove me to the best hotel. I was sort of dazed and felt as if I were obtaining money under false pretenses, or taking candy from children; I was overwhelmed by my own importance; nobody in Europe had ever considered me so important before; and I was bowed down by the responsibility of living up to my own new significance.

Then followed twenty-eight or thirty hours of most delightful companionship with some of the ablest men of Italy, visits to more factories, the examination of more engines, planes and plans, the meeting and the memorable dinner with Signor Caproni and his friends and, to cap all, the flight in the biplane in the golden afternoon. We shall all of us soon know that airplaning ordinarily is just as safe as taxicabing.

I suppose others have written of their sensations during their first flight, but I do not remember having read anything of this sort. Perhaps it may not interest others to read of mine, but it would have interested me to read of someone else's before my own experience, so I take the chance.

It was quite warm that afternoon, and, as I stood by the big Caproni, with overalls above all my clothing, fur coat on top of that, a knitted hood over head, ears, neck, and a tough, thick, heavy helmet over that, the perspiration began to soak through all these thicknesses.

Then my kind friends remembered, after getting out the machine, tuning her up, and swathing me in many piles of wool and fur, that they must get a permission for me to fly, so they went off to the telephone to unwind the necessary red tape. I had no uneasiness, however, as I already knew the fine Italian hand's ability to unwind red tape; and I felt sure that Engineer Caproni, standing smiling and bareheaded near at hand, would manage somehow, in emergency.

My Turkish bath was going merrily forward when at last word was given me to climb in. It is some distance up to the nose of a big biplane; and the costume is not conducive to agility; but I managed. Then I found I could

not get my legs into the small space in front of the seat in the bows of the boat which they pointed out to me; and, if I tried to sit on the low back of the seat, the strap would not go around me to buckle me in.

I began to despair; and because of the roar of the three big engines, two hundred horse-power each, I could not make known my embarrassments, except by signs. The pilot, however, seemed to understand. He was a tough, weather-beaten birdman, with assurance in his eye and the usual beak nose. I had sized him up long ago; and he had my complete confidence. He motioned to me to climb over him, and to stand in the middle of the plane between two tanks. I did so, and found it an elevated, airy and altogether satisfactory position. There I stood throughout the flight.

The birdman opened and closed his throttle and his spark with a resulting crescendo and diminuendo, but never a pianissimo; then he glanced around, grasped my hand, now encased in his own gloves that he had taken off and loaned me, pointed to the propellers and cautioned me against trying to stop them with my fingers. Even a cap flying off can smash a propeller and bring a plane crashing to earth.

Then he settled himself in his seat, twisted his trunk and shoulders as if trying his own freedom of movement and hooked up something with his foot or his "joystick" that started us lightly bumping over the grass.

If anybody expects to be seasick in an airplane he has another expectation coming. This first little spin over the grass is the only thing approaching the motion of a boat that he will experience. Indeed, even this is more like the motion of a rarefied and denatured motor car than that of a boat. We airily footed it clear across the field and turned around to get the light wind in our faces; then we headed for the airshed, gradually increased our speed as if bent on bumping into the sheds and half way across began to rise.

I was watching intently for the moment of leaving the ground, so as to analyze the sensation, but there was no sensation to analyze. The light fantastic touch upon the bumpy greensward just seemed to die away, that's all. In two seconds the airshed was passed by, then the telephone poles and wires, then the trees, then houses.

There was no sensation of giddy height. I am not cool and keen about sitting in fifth-story windows or looking down from church steeples. I would be a dismal failure as a

chimney sweep or steeple jack, or even a lineman; for my head turns at any considerable height; but, on my word, there was nothing of this dread of high position in this experience, though we flew to about six thousand feet. I had been assured beforehand that this was true and was not disappointed.

My "innards" did rise once, however, and that was when the pilot "banked" all of a sudden, that is leaned way to one side, brought his plane heeling over to leeward, like a sailboat in a sudden squall, and made me feel as if I were standing, like a fly, on a vertical wall. I had supposed we would sail straight away for our objective, and had forgotten that he would probably circle and climb, like a wild duck arising from a lake. The next time he "banked" I was "laying" for him and the sensation was nothing but enjoyable. After all, courage, as someone has said, is only the ability to do over again what you have done before.

At last the pilot turned to me, pointed to one of his innumerable gauges, and held up his fingers, a certain number of them, and tried to make me understand our height. I nodded and grinned through my goggles as if I thoroughly understood. Anything to make

him turn around, get his hands on those controls again and attend to his business.

I'd run my end of the boat all right if he'd run his, no matter what the height. Then, as if satisfied, he turned back and set her nose for the distant point to which we were to sail. The city came sweeping and streaming under our feet. I had been told to watch out for the cathedral,—one of the biggest and grandest in Europe—but I forgot it for a while; then when I sought for it all squares looked alike to me.

I wondered if some day, from a great height, we may look down and see factories indistinguishable from cathedrals, hovels and palaces.

I was cold enough now, and the perspiration had turned to ammonia or something equally volatile and shivery. The roar of the three engines, one on each side and one behind me, was like the roar of Niagara underneath the falls; and besides that, my ears were bubbling from the altitude. I was deaf for ten minutes when we came down, and half afraid I should never hear again.

The pilot was not; for he conversed with others, I knew, in even tones. I could see his lips move. A thousand feet or so on a railway or a funicular always gives me the

bubbles. When I spoke of it afterwards, the lieutenant, who went up with us, only laughed and said it was the noise of the engines, but I knew better.

The rush through the air was the only indication of high speed. Standing as I was, I had to brace myself, and felt all the time as if some powerful hand was trying to push me down by tilting my head back. The helmet, I was sure, was two or three stories too high; and I was momentarily afraid it would fly off and play hob with the propellers; though I knew it was strapped under my chin with a good strong strap. Excellent exercise this for the muscles of the neck.

The fields looked like little green squares, as I expected; and the roads like bits of white channels all tangled up. Where a straight piece of roadway ran, it was only a bit of braid, a sixteenth of an inch wide. Then suddenly one roadway looked wider, for there was a rat running along in it.

My, how that rat did get up and hump himself! He passed all other vermin and insects on the road, and he ran with wonderful smoothness and rapidity, parallel with our course. I knew he was going some, because we were going some, and he seemed almost to keep up with us.

Then I reasoned that he was, of course, a motor car, and I actually laughed out loud, though I didn't even hear myself. There are some places in which your nerves are strung up and you are ready to laugh at anything or nothing. It's that way in school, in church, or in an airplane.

"Here, you, pilot, keep your hands on those joy sticks, and your feet on the soft pedal!" I had confidence in the captain, yes, but not too much confidence. I didn't want him to neglect his business and lean over the side looking around too much. "Here, boy, quit monkeying with those levers. She's doing very well. If you go to changing things she may balk on us and make us come down before our journey is over. She's doing tip top, I say; let well enough alone."

One can't help thinking impertinent things the first time one is up; one's mind is too everlastingly active.

Then we pierced into clouds. They rolled all around us like mist, like fog; and soon we emerged into the blue above them. The sky seemed smaller and closer than I had ever seen it before. Above the clouds on a mountain gives no such feeling; for there is the mountain to go by.

Here there is no basis of comparison; and

the ring of the horizon seems very constricted, the blue canopy above, very close to one's head. I could think of no adequate reason for this, and decided at last that the impression was wholly psychological, imaginative. The lieutenant, however, told me afterwards that he always had the same feeling above the clouds, and he was sure it was not merely psychological.

By and by the pilot turned around and made signs that it was a very misty day, and that the landscape was shut out. I didn't mind, if he didn't; I was very well pleased with the skyscape.

Then he did the first impolite thing I ever saw an Italian officer do. I suppose, after all, he tried to prepare me for it. He shut off those three engines and dived. I was sure he was trying to throw me out of the concern head foremost.

We pitched nose down, like a ship from the top of a high comber, when she buries bowsprit and forecastle in the brine. It was like Uncle Ezra's first drop in a high speed elevator; it was like the roller coaster, when you leave your dining apparatus at the top of the incline; it was like the times when Uncle Bill used to "run under" you in the swing when you were six years old and impressionable.

I was sure that the macaroni of that day's luncheon was left hanging on the clouds; for we soon shot out of them, and the green earth came rushing up to meet us. The silence was oppressive.

"Here, captain. For heaven's sake turn on those engines. They may never work again. Do try them, captain, there's a good fellow!"

He did try them, and they ripped off three yards of cloth in no time; then he shut them off again. Then he ripped off nine yards of calico, and silence again. We circled and settled leisurely, calmly, floatingly. Other planes were in our path, beside us, above us, I counted thirteen in two minutes.

"Can you see 'em, old fellow? Don't let's bump into them. I'd hate to kill any of these nice Italian aviators."

We sailed over a field where a family was loading a hay wagon. We were so close above them that I could see "pa's" eyes and "ma's" teeth and "Sal's" bare feet, as they looked up and waved their hands. I thought we were going to take the top off that load of hay and lodge our wheels in the hedge just beyond, but we cleared both.

Then we tilted our nose slightly up, and I could not record the moment when we touched earth. Now we polkaed up to the airshed, to which we were bringing a new machine,

XVII

OUR ARMY OVERSEAS

WE were within sound of the guns once more, lulled to sleep by their rumble and awakened in the morning by American bugles sounding reveille. By the time I was out on the village street the lads had had their breakfast and were swinging along toward their day's work at the training grounds.

In advance was a pick and shovel outfit, followed by infantry with steel helmets and full packs. After all the foreign troops I had watched, these home huskies looked good to me. They are slim legged, red and brown faced, spring heeled lads with a jauntiness of step all their own.

They show up well on the boulevards of Paris, along the railways, where they are at work running trains and studying block systems and building lines, on station platforms, in fields and village streets. Perhaps I should not say "streets"; for I inquired my way to divisional headquarters from one of them, and

he replied in his broad southern drawl: "Up this first alley—y'all can't miss it!"

He pointed to the principal thoroughfare of the municipality and called it "alley." It sounded very much like home. Then his last phrase, "You can't miss it," sounded very British; for after the most intricate directions given you in England by an obliging person, "third turning on the left, fourth on the right, bearing all the while north by east," the Englishman invariably adds, in the cheeriest of voices: "You cawn't miss it!"

We had had a never-to-be-forgotten ride. We followed the winding curve of the clear, blue Marne; we noted the lines along which the first great plunge of the German forces were made; we saw where they were headed off, pushed back; we stood where their desperate stand was made and the great battle was fought upon which hung the fate of civilization.

Then we traveled miles of roadway bordered by the scattered and clustered graves of heroic men, buried where they fell. Here was one with its wooden cross and its French flag in the middle of a field all alone; here was one just inside the wire fencing of the railway right of way; here were two in a little grove of trees, sleeping beneath the

Union Jack, side by side; here half a dozen in the corner of a sheep pasture; yonder, three or four surrounded by plowed ground.

On every road-crossing and on every railway station were printed names that, for three years, we have read in communiqués over and over until they have become household words. Here, on the river bank, was a famous shambles; here, in this village, was fought out one of the most stubborn small actions; this railway station is denuded of glass in its trainshed—the work of aerial bombs—and the rain pours down as if the platforms were out of doors, while passengers stand with umbrellas and waterproofs dripping.

Yonder are walls pitted and scarred with rifle and shell fire; and in the fields, hobbling about with tools, or on the roadways stumping along by carts, are the remnants of cannon fodder chewed up and spat out from the maw of Mars.

The Americans there seemed to be mostly southerners. The brogue of Alabama, Tennessee and the Carolinas, anywhere below the Mason-Dixon line, seemed the predominant strain in the greeting from the men as they shook hands with us after the evening meeting at the Y. M. C. A. tent. The officers, too,

that I met seemed to hail largely from the South.

Our very first experience in this area one night was a truly southern meeting at the station gates. It was raining heavily, and the telegram announcing our arrival from Paris to the Y. M. officials probably did not arrive until the week after. So we were a pair of wet and lost souls, until an American officer, bundled in waterproofs, drawled out:

"Where y'all goin'? Come, get into my car. Yes, throw your baggage in. Come right along."

My seat was beside the sergeant driving the Cadillac, and I said to him:

"The major is a southerner, isn't he?"

"Humph!" snorted the sergeant. "He's a major general!"

To give still more the atmosphere of Dixie, there is a big negro cook in a certain company. Down at the French port, where the boys landed, he saw another gentleman of color strolling about, and immediately breezed up to him as to a brother and opened up, "Boy, howdy!" The second negro replied in French. They stood eyeing each other. Then they got excited, talked rapidly, each in the tongue to which he was born, and louder all the time, as they gesticulated wildly. Finally the Dixie

cook turned away and, with infinite disgust, said to the paymaster, standing near:

"Humph! That boy—he ain't no nigger nohow!"

This big cook has a voice like a bass violin and called out to every lad a half block away, "Boy, howdy," as nearly as I can make out and spell the vernacular greeting current in the American army.

Just outside the tent where I was visiting was another negro, a chauffeur, tinkering with a Red Triangle car and explaining its working to two American girls with Y. M. C. A. badges upon their arms, who were probably to take charge of this machine, or to work in some canteen near by.

Across the road were supply company men butchering a hog, and a supply officer sitting on horseback overseeing the job. The cooking and eating seemed all to be done in the streets and the rain. The men are billeted in barns, haymows, anywhere they can find shelter, in quarters that no British Tommy would long endure. For mine, I drew a luxurious billet in the *estaminet,* under the roof, with no window, but a bit of a skylight open for air.

I saw van loads of portable huts on the railway sidings as I went along—if they will

only get there some day! Boats from America is what is needed, just as Lloyd George said:

"Ships, more ships, and then ships!"

I have reason to believe that American engineers will lay the trackage of our supply lines fast enough if they can only get the stuff to lay. But nobody can make railways without bricks, straw and rails.

I must say, however, that the American boys bear their discomforts with as little complaining as men could. I looked into a stable where twenty-eight men were quartered, found them cleaning their rifles, boots and brass buttons.

"Comfortable?" I asked. "Fine, sir," came the answer. "Lots better than a pup tent in the cactus!"

"Any sick?"

"I'm the only one, sir," answered one rather pale. "Just got out of hospital to-day. Not enough blood and a touch of rheumatism."

I could get no word of complaint out of them or any man I talked with in the Y. M. hut. They were anxious only about one thing, and that was to get up into the line and fight.

"We're ready now!" they cried. "Let us at 'em!"

We would call out sometimes to a thousand Sammies in the Y. M. C. A. audience:

"Can you fellows sing 'Pack up your troubles in your old kit bag?'"

Then there would invariably come back a roar:

"We ain't got no troubles!"

The Y. M. C. A. was doing its best, with a few huts, some tents and a limited number of motor trucks. Much of their material equipment has been greatly delayed in transit. In spite of this, however, twelve stations have been opened in this advanced line, covering a stretch of some twenty miles.

The huts are overcrowded all the time, and will soon be replaced with larger and better ones, the present ones being turned over to the army for barracks.

There are three or four pianos in the huts here, and more arriving.

One must remember in estimating the promptness of the Y. M., that it was informed last spring that no American troops would be sent over here until fall; then suddenly, under urgent requests from the Allies, plans were changed, and the troops are pouring across with their supplies as rapidly as ships can be found to bring them.

Considering all the circumstances, therefore, it appears to me that the Red Triangle is doing wonderfully well; and the soldiers

said to me: "I don't know what we'd do without this hut to come to. I guess we'd die!"

The health of the boys was excellent, aside from injuries by accident in bomb practice and the like, where the risks are inevitable.

There was practically no illness.

None of them, of course, were in the trenches; although the officers go up in batches to observe. I talked with one of our captains who was with the Foreign Legion, the other day, at the big push beyond Verdun. His eyes glowed as he told of the experience.

Sanitation seemed well looked after, and certain measures of prophylaxis are being rigidly enforced to prevent incapacitation of men in the fashion in which some of the armies suffered earlier in the war. The fact, too, that the camps are rural prevents much of this danger to our American troops.

It would be better, however, if our men had less money. The officers feel that these young lads are too heavily paid, or at least, that they are allowed to draw too much of their pay.

The French soldiers and the French people are not accustomed to seeing so much money flashed about. Prices are shot to pieces. Farmers' wives, good women, are subjected to

a fearful temptation in these days of want for their families and themselves.

Soldiers do not need much money; there are very few places in which they can legitimately use it; the officers urge them to put it in war bonds; the Y. M. C. A. offers to send any man's money home for him; but neither can do more than exercise moral suasion. They are recommending to the government, I understand, that some adequate measures be devised for the corrections of these dangers.

They are a lively lot, these boys. They do not know yet the camp songs that every British Tommy knows, and that are ringing in the English music halls, songs even of American origin, some of them; but they quickly learn them, and there is nothing that promotes morale more effectively than good singing.

I have a doggerel rhyme composed by a lad billeted in a haymow with fourteen others. He sings the praises of the whole fourteen by name, and tells of the qualities and exploits of each in a manner that reminds one of the rhymes emanating from British trenches. Here is one verse of it; and it is noteworthy that the name mentioned is of German origin:

> First of all is Corporal Weiss,
> He's been with us quite a while;
> And when it comes to cracking jokes,
> He can make the devil smile.

When we think of the number of German names that will come over with our army—a half dozen occur in this barrack rhyme—we can only wonder what the French police will do with them all.

We American travelers have consumed time enough ourselves with our plainly English patronymics, in consulting and being examined by officers of the secret service, both English and French, to render us apprehensive about our soldiers. Perhaps, after all, the onus of responsibility will rest upon America herself.

One day, one of our boys with a German name, stood watching a group of Boche prisoners file by, when suddenly his eyes met those of his own brother among the Huns. The American soldier shouted his brother's name; and this violated the rule that none but their captains may communicate with prisoners. He found himself, therefore, in difficulties with the French.

When, however, he explained the circumstances, an exception was made, and he was allowed to hold a few minutes' conversation with his brother. Then the prisoner moved away with the file, and the great gulf of the world war yawned again between the two.

Out there in the village street—beg pardon,

I should say "alley"—was ranged a battery of machine guns of the crack machine gun company of our army. I suppose there was a score of the guns.

I was told that the men of this branch, all of whom were down on the Mexican border, were in the best physical condition of any of our troops, and were ready then, trained to the point, to go to the front. Our French neighbors—the populace, I mean—wonder why we do not start at once for the trenches. They say that they themselves had to go at once, why do not we?

They do not realize that it takes more than men; it takes artillery, commissary, an elaborate preparation, before we can go forward and take over our part of the line. When we do go forward, I am told, it will be in force, and in such a force as to be felt. Meantime, give us time, and boats, and boats, and boats.

I saw a number of other machine gun companies and talked with their officers. They are enthusiastic, both about the discipline of their men and their marksmanship.

I heard varied reports as to how the men are behaving themselves. On the whole, however, after careful listening to evidence, I was inclined to believe that drinking was not ex-

cessive. Pure water is sometimes scarce, and the men can hardly be expected to forego the native wines altogether. A few men got drunk at nights, but only a few, and those always the same ones. A few were laid up in hospital through their own fault, but only a few.

Taken for all in all, I believe our men will make a record comparable to that of the British in France, which is a record that will be an everlasting credit to the British Empire.

One night I strolled into the little cemetery near one of the camps and found two new graves, marked with the names, companies and regiments of two American boys. These are the first two to lie asleep under French soil. I learned, upon inquiry, that one of these had been drowned while bathing in a neighboring stream, while the other had shot himself, during the night, not long ago.

I must confess to a strong tug at the heart strings as I thought of the hundreds and thousands of our boys who, in my judgment, will sleep in this far land before we have done our utmost duty here.

XVIII

AMERICANS SITTING IN THE SHADOWS

HE was a homesick looking lad. I sold him something or other at the canteen counter; then he drifted over and sat down against the wall of the hut. The place was full of men, but there was a vacant chair next to him. I watched his downcast features for a while, and then sat down beside him.

"Ever get homesick over here?" I asked.

"Me? Homesick? That's the least of my troubles."

"What are your troubles, then?"

"It's my blankety blank company. If I was in a decent company I'd never worry."

"What's the matter with 'em?"

"Oh, they think they know it all, and they don't know nothing. They are most of them new recruits; if they'd all been down at the border and seen some service they'd be different."

I was still searching for the real trouble for

I was convinced it lay deeper. By and by I got the facts. The boy was from Wisconsin. His father had fought for Germany in '70. His uncle was now a German prisoner in French hands, and the boy had seen and talked with him at the seaport.

He had also recently received a letter from his folks back in Wisconsin saying that he need never come home again, since he had taken up arms against the fatherland. More than that, his comrades in the company were none too cordial with him on account of his German name.

"It makes no difference. I'm going to stick. I'm an American, whatever my people were, and I'm going to see it through. I'm just waiting until I see whether I get promotion. The sergeant is recommending me for a stripe. If I don't get it—well, I can hold my own with any man in the blank'd company, and the first one that says anything to me I'm going to biff him."

Just then three breezy young "Sammies"—that is the name by which the American soldiers are going to be known over here, just as the English are "Tommies;" there was much grave editorial discussion in London on this subject; it would not do to say Yankees, or Yanks, as this might offend the Americans; so

"Sammies" was adopted, from Uncle Sam, and Sammies they will remain—well, I say, three young lads came breezing into the hut and making straight for my friend opened up on him:

"Hello, Herman; by gosh, I haven't seen you since we left Brownsville. Where've you——"

"Hello, Shorty; hello, Bill; hello, Jim. I'm sure glad to see you. When'd you land here?"

"Just now. We've been wiring the new headquarters for General Pershing, about so many kilometers from here. We landed at——"

"Say, Shorty," said the German lad wistfully, "how can I get transferred to your company?"

Then followed a stream of border reminiscence, and Herman's face gradually cleared and brightened. At last I got up, knowing he was now in good hands, and walked away, while he waved his hand to me and smiled, saying, "See you to-morrow."

To-day at mess one boy, who goes by the nickname of "Dutch," was quietly munching in a corner when some fellow cried out: "Hey, Dutch, what are you, German or Holland-Dutch?" "I'm German! I'm no flat-headed Dutchman!" growled the lad.

"Got any folks in Germany?"

"Yes, I did have, anyway. Three or four uncles and seven cousins. Most of 'em all killed off, though."

"Too bad, too bad," said somebody conventionally.

"Oh, I don't know," replied Dutch. "Saved me from having to kill 'em."

Under the apparently flippant words lay a whole world of grim pathos.

It is rather hard lines for German-American boys in the army; they are between two millstones. Yet it is a strange fact that many of the non-commissioned officers are either German, Polish, Hungarian or Russian Jews. The men remark about it and declare that, if the sergeants and corporals would give their real names, you would find most of them ending in "ski" and "off" and the like. "Why," said one of the boys to me, "they can't give orders in English!" I myself inquired my way from one of them one evening, and I could scarcely understand his reply. These lads of foreign birth feel that they have to make good, are devoted to duty, punctilious, ambitious and anxious for the extra pay.

Much has been written about the ingenuity of Tommy Atkins in communicating with his new French neighbors; well, the American is

not lacking in ingenuity, whatever else he may lack. I was dining at the officers' mess of a certain company, one evening, just after the new steel helmets had been issued. One big lieutenant, who had evidently come up through the ranks, a rollicking, black-mustached, hail-fellow-well-met type of fellow, who smiled perpetually from ear to ear and showed a mouth full of fine white teeth—by Jove, what a relief it is to see so many beautiful teeth in men's heads as I see these days!—insisted upon wearing his helmet at the table.

He had no more than got seated until he began to roar: "Mam'selle! Gertrude! Eat! *Oui, oui!* I talk French. *Oui, oui* means 'all gone!' Gertrude!"

When Gertrude appeared—a smiling brunette, an Italian girl, in a French *estaminet*—the big lieutenant carried on all the conversation with her in this lingo and with his gestures in spite of the fact that an interpreter, a handsome French officer, sat there engaging in the universal laughter. The lieutenant got up and moved about the place, thrusting his nose into the pie—glorious pie it was—tossing his cigarette stub out the window, and along with it a string of greetings to women and children who chanced to pass. Everybody got a share of his attentions and—his French!

I am reminded of a sign once displayed in a Paris café window: "Wanted, American waiters who can speak French."

Someone asked the restaurateur if he hadn't plenty of French waiters who could speak French. He replied, "*Mais oui,* I want waiters zat can speak ze kind of French zat ze Americans speak!"

One middle-aged corporal, the other afternoon, hung around the Y. M. canteen counter until closing time, and the secretary started away for dinner. The corporal followed, and then the secretary realized that the man had something on his mind. "Anything I can do for you, corporal?"

"Yes, sir, a very great favor, sir," answered the corporal, with evident hesitation. "Could you write out something for me in French if I tell you what to write?"

"I think I could. What is it?"

"Well, sir, it's this way," hesitated the corporal. "I'm billeted in a house with the nicest little French woman and her two clean, pretty little children. Her husband is away at the front. Well, sir, the other night some French officers came around and they wanted me to go and have a good time with them, and I did. I got a little off, I suppose; you know this wine —well, anyway, I don't exactly know what

happened, but that nice little woman hasn't been the same to me any more. I think she must be mad on me. I want to apologize to her, tell her I'm sorry, and it won't happen again; or if she still feels mad on me, and wants me to change my quarters, I'll go way. If I write this out, sir, could you put it over into French?"

"I'll do my best, corporal," answered the secretary. That night the corporal brought his composition, fearfully and wonderfully constructed, to the hut; and it was duly turned into the vernacular of the vicinity; and the corporal went away proud and happy. The secretary never heard directly of the outcome; but two days later there was a ball game; the corporal drifted in and bought two cakes of chocolate, and a little later the secretary saw the corporal sitting at the game with two nice, clean little children beside him munching chocolate. If that corporal should survive the war, and the French husband should not, the chances are the United States would be short one citizen and France would gain a husband for one of her widows. Such is the history of armies in foreign lands. One man in this division has already married a peasant girl here.

Another lad brought a letter in French to

one of the secretaries for translation. The secretary told me what it contained. It was an answer to a proposal of marriage. The young woman said: "Your country and my country are at war. You are over here to do your part and I am trying to do mine. It is no time to talk about marriage. When the war is over, if you are still alive and I am, too, it will then be time enough to talk about getting married."

I call that pretty good horse sense, don't you? You may just count upon it, however, that many a man who comes over here will never get back, who does not fall in battle. France will be shy a good many men and have an over supply of women. Inevitable marriages will follow.

There are three topics of conversation at officers' mess, three eternal questions. The first is women. One officer the other night, talking about learning French declared the only way to master this tongue is with "one of these long haired dictionaries." It goes without saying—which, by the way, is a French idiomatic phrase—it goes without saying that the eternal feminine is the first everlasting subject with men.

Then the second question is "shop," military discussion. Can we break the Hindenburg

line? Is there to be open fighting? Will the war be finished with airplane and machine gun coöperating with infantry? "I'm for a corps of cavalry!" cried a colonel.

Says a very bright captain of a machine gun company, a West Pointer: "Cavalry is a thing of the past. The machine gun, with indirect fire, forming the barrage, coöperating, to be sure, with heavy guns and infantry, is the way through the German line. Of course, the line will be broken. It will be costly, but it will be broken."

Then follows the third subject—death! They may carry themselves as airily as they please, but these officers are never free from the thought of the great tansition. They have most of them been up the line, or near it, on observation; and they know, as I know and have good cause to know, what awaits the combatant in that line. The enlisted men are less disturbed by the presence of the overhanging shadow. They are younger and not so well informed. Besides, responsibility is not resting upon them. Theirs but to do and die. One lad bought a safety razor of the very best kind in the canteen one night and three extra packages of blades. I sold it to him. Then I said: "You must expect to do a deal of shaving, my son?" "Well," he replied, "I don't

suppose I'll be able to get one of these things again in this country." I could not but wish that he may live to use up all those blades.

It is the officer, however, who, more sensitively constituted, more cultivated and imaginative, is able to visualize the impending danger; and when you see him sitting unoccupied for a few minutes, there comes into his eye that far-away, absorbed expression that has grown so familiar to me among British and French officers and men; and you know, as if his forehead were plate glass, the thoughts too deep for words that are living and moving in his brain.

The enlisted man frankly declares that the war will be over before he ever sees the line. The wish is plainly father to the thought. The officer labors under no such self-born delusion. He knows the chances are all for a long, hard struggle yet before us and one in which America will have to pay her price. If the republic does not realize this now she will wake up to it as soon as one division is cut to pieces, one transport sunk. Then will a flame of fire run from New York to San Francisco, from Portland to Galveston and the great pacific, sleeping people will arouse itself from half-slumber and really exert its power. Unless something very unforeseen occurs we shall pay back some

of our obligation to the land of Lafayette with rich, young American blood.

But these men, I know, will not falter. As a young lad said to me, quietly, "There is not a coward among them." They come of fighting blood. They will go grimly through the task given them to perform, the task of rendering war impossible and unnecessary for their sons and their sons' sons, that they, in turn, may give their fighting qualities to the causes of freedom and democracy, the solution of the problems of peace, the betterment of humanity, the ideals toward which the world is blindly groping upward through mud and blood and smoke.

XIX

AMERICAN BOYS AND FRENCH CHASSEURS

AS we slept, all innocent of harm, last night, German planes sailed over our heads and dropped their deadly freight on each side of us. Accustomed to alarums and excursions, we slept on; but this morning we heard of their visit, and went to see the destruction. A number of civilians were killed and wounded in a certain town hard by. Here I saw the first women's tears I have seen in France. We saw the cars derailed and smashed in the Germans' attempt to blow up the station; but the *"gare"* itself was uninjured. Near at hand was a hut, which had been shattered completely, and curious soldiers were walking around it and peering in.

Simultaneously with this expedition the morning papers report, there was another over the English coast at Dover. While these things occur with such frequency we cannot claim to be masters in the air. It is perfectly

evident, therefore, where America can put in her best licks in preparation. While sending boats and more boats, let some of them be airboats. This war is going to hinge upon supremacy in that element.

I rather suspected that aircraft activity was going forward last night, for it was a beautiful moonlight night. I stood talking with a group of Sammies outside the Y. M. hut, after a meeting a thousand strong, when they suddenly observed and pointed out to me what looked like a new planet in the sky. I soon saw it change in color from white to blue and then to yellow. The men thought it a signal, from the changes in color; but to me it seemed an aircraft of some description, so long it remained afloat and moved about; some thought it a star-shell; but no star-shell hangs so long in the sky. Planes come over so often, however, that we thought comparatively little of the matter.

I was soon absorbed in the story of how our boys had trained their guns on one of our own French planes, a short time since, by mistake. The men who did the firing, both with rifles and machine guns, were the men grouped around me, and each contributed his part of the tale. Everybody had been nervous and on the *qui vive* at that time, for General

Pershing was to come that way in a few minutes on a tour of inspection. Indeed, his car had already been sighted coming down that hill over yonder, and the men pointed to the spot. Suddenly a plane came shooting down out of a cloud and hung quite low above them. They could see no allied markings on her, and they had several minutes of great uneasiness and perplexity. It afterwards developed that the French airman was flying upside down. I have myself seen them perform that stunt many a time. The purpose is to get their guns in such position as to shoot upward. A French officer was present with our soldiers and after a moment's hesitation he advised the major in command of our troops to open fire. The major gave the order and the rifles and machine guns did the rest. Almost instantly the aviator righted his machine and they saw the allied emblem in its proper place. I know that the emblems are painted on top as well as underneath; but, for some reason, the men failed to discern the markings.

It was impossible, however, to avoid the damage to the plane. One wing was broken; and the aviator tried to land close at hand but, finding no suitable place, managed with his crippled craft to effect a landing further

on. He himself was uninjured. He afterward signed a written statement, so the men told me, that it was his own fault for acting in a suspicious manner.

When the story was all done, the corporal who had narrated most of it, took me aside to show me photographs, just received, of his "ex-wife" in Cripple Creek. He said she had divorced him because she did not know where he was. It was his own fault. He had no reason to complain. It seems he had had some qualms of conscience, after reaching La Belle France, or some homesick longings, and had written her. Then he insisted upon my reading her reply, which, it appeared had done much for his *amour propre*. I rather thought, myself, from the tone of the letter, that the wife would be glad to see him "make a man of himself" and come back to her. Here's hoping that he does; and from the close relations he seems to have established with the Y. M. leaders, it would not surprise me, if he becomes a new man, provided he lives at all.

That I am not exaggerating the possibilities of danger to our own men over here was amply borne out by the words of an American ambulance driver, who had been in the recent push at Verdun, Hill 304 and Mort Homme.

He said: "The Boche will have it in for the first American they can locate. I wouldn't like to be in the first line that goes up." Nor does this young man believe that the Hun is nearly exhausted, or that he has lost his spirit. I have seen some 1,200 of the prisoners lately taken and they are in very fair physical condition, young, but well fed and therefore quick to recover from fatigue. Our artillery is undoubtedly superior to the German, but the supremacy of the air hereabouts is open to question. As for the vanished morale of the Germans, the reports are, like the famous ones concerning Mark Twain's premature death, somewhat exaggerated.

For example, this young driver told me of a Boche prisoner whom he himself had brought into the advanced dressing station wounded; how the fellow had been dressed and then wriggled away in a stolen French coat; how he had crawled to the French trenches hard by, scrambled over them, stole a revolver somewhere and shot at an officer and how they caught him, with their machine guns, going over No Man's Land, and hit him again. This time his back was riddled, and after two or three days out in a shell hole he was brought back again; and they had him in the same dressing station once more. The man had been without food

for five days straight and part of the time for five days before that, but he recovered. There was morale left in this one fellow, anyhow. Do not for a moment believe that the war is over.

One of the most interesting things about the battle fronts is the fashion in which batteries and aircraft guns, great howitzers and even giant naval guns may be concealed. I have had the guns to open almost under my feet on either side of me, and just behind me, when I was convinced they were within fifty or one hundred yards of where I stood, and have been unable to locate them. This has happened as I walked over a battlefield where not a spear of grass, a tree or a bush or stump was left standing, nothing but miles of yellow mud. How guns and batteries could be so placed that one could not see them at such close proximity almost passes comprehension. It is very clever. On one or two occasions I have located them, later on, by the flashes from the muzzles and confirmed the belief that they were close at hand. Guns are, of course, hidden in every wood, shrub or bush along the front.

After the first time that one of your own shells goes over your head the sensation is not unpleasant. The first time you jump, duck,

feel sheepish and altogether miserable. Of the various kinds of music from these overhead messengers I prefer the tone and timbre of the English five-point-nine. It has a fine voice of its own. The French seventy-five emits more of a soprano note. For those who care only for soprano voices—but this is getting to be more metaphorical than the subject will stand.

There is no joy at all in listening to the approach of a hostile shell or air craft bomb. It is altogether devilish, goose-fleshy, jumpy, and makes one feel as one does when a Klaxon sounds suddenly in your ear when crossing a crowded street. You want to jump and then turn around and glare at and "cuss" somebody. Then comes the thump and you breathe again and are woefully ashamed of yourself.

I think I saw some of the finest men in the French army to-day—the Algerians and the Alpin chasseurs. The Algerians were coming back from Verdun, from a long spell of fighting, to the rest camp. I could not feel, in looking at them, that they were vastly in need of help, so all alive did they appear. I was surprised, too, at the whiteness of skin of many of them, but the officer with me promptly explained it by the admixture of French blood. The men were in a clay-colored khaki

with red fezzes. They were allowed off the train for a little while in the station; then the bugle sounded and before all of them were on again the train moved slowly away on its road back from the front.

The wild-looking fellows came scrambling from all directions, to run and clamber on the train. Some carried their rifles with bayonets still fixed, and as they ran, their faces eager and anxious, I got some notion of how they would look on charge. I should not care to meet them.

The French chasseur is the flower of the French army. These are the boys who, in Napoleon's day, used to wear the shining breastplates, the tall boots and the horsetail plumes. Now they wear the nattiest black or blue broadcloth, with the most daredevil cut, and the most attractive little visorless caps, with big soft crowns, lolling backward over one ear. One of these lads, with a quarter of an inch of mustache on each side of his nose, a raincoat draped carelessly over one shoulder and high russet boots to his knees, with the *croix de guerre* and the *médaille militaire* upon his breast, strode up and down the platform in a fashion to have stolen every feminine heart, if there had only been some feminine hearts about. As it was, he was bound for

Paris, where it was easy to see he would cut a considerably wide swath. I wouldn't blame the women for having their heads turned by him; for you may be very sure he is all the hero he looks.

These people are all heroes here. I don't believe there are any but heroes left in the French army. All the rest have been killed off long ago; and no man can go through what these men have gone through without having been somehow, somewhere heroic. Heroism, as has been so often said, is the normal, the common, the every day thing over here.

I met a man this morning who had come over from America to fight for his beloved France. He had been through nearly three years in the trenches. And who do you think he was? The chef in a famous Michigan resort hotel. And whom do you think he met one night in his own regiment in the trenches? The chef of a well-known Chicago hotel, to whom he had been an assistant years before. Even cooks here must be heroic, for often and often they do their cooking under shell fire; but the two here referred to were shouldering rifles and not ladles.

Nevertheless, France is war weary. The eternal question is on every lip, "Monsieur, how long do you think it will last?" The

same expression comes from every heart, "O, it is terrible, terrible, *la guerre!*" Two or three of us are together in my room. The big, angular *femme-de-chambre* enters in her black dress and little white cap. One of the men, thinking to be French in his manner, pleasantly says: *"Mademoiselle est tres jolie dans noir!"* "Ah, monsieur," she replies, and I would not venture to try and put her French into writing, "I wear nothing but black now." "And why?" "For my poor brother—killed in the war four months ago. Yes! monsieur, and a wife and five little children. It is terrible—*la guerre*—terrible! When will it end, monsieur?" So it is, on all sides, and all the time. And they look to America to put an end to it all. We are placed under heavy responsibility.

XX

AMERICANS MUST LEARN THE GAME

THE French are not, by nature and training, an athletic nation. One Sunday afternoon an athletic meet was organized by the Y. M. at a certain camp in the American line, where we have been living for a week. The athletic director, wishing to promote international relations, went over to the French chasseurs, who were billeted in the same village, and asked the officers in charge if they would not send over men to participate in the games. A council of war ensued and finally the major in command, sending for a sergeant, ordered him to detail a dozen men to go over to the contest. Twelve chasseurs were duly called out, drawn up at attention and gravely marched away to the American camp. They went with the same look on their faces with which they would go to clean up an area, to dig ditches, or perform any other fatigue duty. Arrived on the field, they stood gravely at attention and awaited directions.

When a certain event was about to be pulled off, the sergeant would indicate a man to participate; and the chasseur would step out of line and "go to it."

Of course the American lads ran away, or jumped away, or hurled the shot away, from their French comrades. At last, however, the *poilus* caught the infectious merriment and before the afternoon was over they were laughing, shouting and sharing in the fun in a fashion to do your heart good.

Last event of all was a tug of war. The whole round dozen of Frenchmen, or the whole dozen of round Frenchmen, were ranged in line against a dozen lanky Sammies. The bit of white cloth fastened to the rope that ran along between the two groups, representing two nations, was exactly over a chalk line boundary between the United States and La Belle France. A pistol shot, in the language of the detective stories, rang out upon the still Sabbath air. Then the Americans organized spontaneously a series of undulating jerks like those a terrier perpetrates, when he has his teeth firmly in a bit of cord or cloth that his youthful master holds in hand; and French chasseurs advanced with a rapidity that even Hill 304 had never witnessed. It was a case in which the winning army went

backwards, and the losing forwards. It was a battle, too, punctuated by shouts and laughter, in place of curses and bursting shells.

It was everybody's regret that Jack was unable to be present and show his paces. The race in which he has stood ready to run anybody in the British army, and now the American or French armies, and for which he purchased a track suit and running shoes, and devised an emblem of the Chicago Athletic Club, has never yet been run. Either the soldiers have always been too busy, or we ourselves have been sent away to sing and talk for other groups, so that the event could not be staged. There is no loafing on the job on this side of the water. Most men, even past military age, in England and France, are too much occupied with war work, even to play golf, croquet, tennis or so much as cards. The games are played only by soldiers in rare moments of relaxation.

If the French do not excel in athletics, they nevertheless admire any who do. One day a certain captain of ours was arranging quarters for our men in a certain village. He was the first American soldier ever seen there; and a crowd followed him about. He was shown into a stable with a hay loft. The steps up to the mow were dilapidated and some

were missing. There were certain poles projecting from the walls, however, and the slim young fellow swung himself up hand over hand, from one to another. The peasants broke out into cheering at the feat.

First place of all for a billeting party to be taken is the schoolhouse, as there is always space for from thirty to fifty men here. When our captain entered the village school the children sprang up, began cheering for America, and mounted seats and desks in their enthusiasm for their new ally.

This same captain was driving with a French general officer along a country road, when a little boy lying by the roadside threw a handful of gravel at the car. The missiles took good effect; and the general was furious. He stopped his car, although it took nearly half a kilometer to do it, went back, and calling the lad's mother, who was now on the scene, lectured her and the boy roundly, telling her that this young officer with him represented the Great American Republic, and the newest ally; and discourtesy had been offered not merely to the men, but to *Le Grand Nation.* He would not leave until the first lesson in international amenity had been administered warmly to the base of the young scion of France; a lesson that doubtless he will never

forget, but hand on to future generations with keen remembrance and appreciation, beside the cotter's fire of winter nights in the middle years of the Twentieth Century.

The French soldiers take kindly to association football and every evening after their day's work you may see them, red-faced and perspiring, mingle with our own lads on the field kicking and chasing the pigskin oval. They become quite expert, too, with practice, though I do not believe they have quite the athletic instinct of the immediate sons of pioneers. In bombing and trench crawling and such exercises, our men learn with singular rapidity to outdo their instructors. At first the French soldiery were mingled with our men, company for company, and man for man. The French would go through a certain performance, then our men would follow; and each American would possess a French critic, guide, philosopher and friend. In two or three days it became evident that so many instructors were not needed; and now there are only a few French officers left with each unit.

Bomb throwing comes handy to old baseball players. It is done with a different motion than ball throwing, to be sure; it is indeed a stiff-armed side stroke like the English

cricket bowling. Nevertheless our men are quick and adaptable and soon master it. This peculiar stroke is necessary to avoid striking the back of the narrow trench. As the practice goes on with real bombs it is not altogether harmless child's play. One day an American boy struck the parados, or rear of the trench, in his back swing and as a result is now on his way to America minus a hand. Also a Frenchman on our practice grounds dropped one on the floor of the trench, and instead of picking it up quickly and tossing it before its five seconds' fuse had time to spark, he lost his head and put his foot on it. He was killed.

The men are stripped to the waist and taught to crawl on hands and knees, and to wriggle along on their stomachs on the surface or in shallow trenches. They also practice carrying each other on their backs while in this cramped position; sometimes two will carry a very heavy man between them. At all of this kind of business our men are very apt and soon surpass their French instructors.

Do not believe, however, that the little American force has grasped, as yet, these new methods of warfare, or is anything like prepared to take its share. The grim general in charge is determined they shall not go into

the mill and shoulder their load until they are prepared in all points; first line, supporting line, third line, supply communications stretching clear back to America unbroken, artillery of our own and not somebody else's, and air fleets manned by Americans and under American command. This is not a matter of national egotism, but a matter of safety for the lives of men. An immense amount is necessary for us both to do and to learn before that time comes. This warfare is of a type new to us, and we must study it from the ground up. Furthermore, just as it takes fifteen men to care for and to fly one airplane, so it takes a vast number of people to man a fighting line, more for us than for anybody else, because our communications are so much longer. Every individual in our nation will be necessary before we get through.

I am informed upon the best authority that we have two regiments now at one of the allied fronts and that they are so ill-equipped as to be compelled to borrow shoes, socks, clothing and such necessary supplies from their neighbors. If that is the case in the height of summer, what is to be expected when the winter comes on, in the way of trench feet, pneumonia and the like? Unless we can organize a supply system that will adequately

clothe and furnish our men, we shall pay the price not merely in sickness, but in death. Our men may be athletic and adaptable, but they are not immortal.

A heavy per cent of these boys are raw recruits, outside of the marines. Their marching in the streets of London and Paris, while the populace huzzaed and welcomed them with kindly enthusiasm, was not such as to fill American military men with overweening pride. I have talked with their leaders and I know how they felt. The American press had heralded these men as regulars, as fine a fighting force as there was in the world. Instead came recent volunteers mixed with regulars to challenge comparison with the finest troops this world ever saw. We, who were there, could not but think of that small army of British regulars a little over sixty thousand strong, which began the war in that wonderful retreat from Belgium, and left all but about eight thousand scattered along the way.

We are not "stuck up" over our own first showing. We have got to retrieve that loss of prestige, not by more boasting about 100,000 airplanes that we say we are going to build and cannot build, nor even fifty thousand, nor twenty-five thousand; but by patient enlisting,

equipping and drilling of an army, while we keep our mouths grimly shut and do, instead of talk.

Meantime, there come to us stories over here of rich men in America exempted because they have married a wife and needs must support her, of famous golf players, who think they can better serve their country, civilization and God by playing gallery play for the beflanneled men and beribonned women who are posing as devoted Red Crossers. Talk about "muddied oafs at the goal!" Only two men out of ten who are called to the colors in New York, we hear, sign up and take the oath! Thank God, the Middle West, the much doubted Middle West, is doing far better than that! I have read somewhere in history of a man "who married a wife and therefore could not come." For him the heads of no gates will be lifted up!

Pardon for breaking into exhortation and a measure of denunciation. If all America could see that little group of children at a French port it would have its effect. Our boys had just left the transports. They were in the hastily improvised Y. M. C. A. hut. They had a wheezy little melodeon and were squeezing out the Marseillaise—most glorious of songs. Some little school children wandered

in, fingers in mouths. The boys put them up on a table and commanded them to sing. The little people, woefully embarrassed, tried to comply; but fingers and thumbs blocked the song. By and by they caught the infection from the little melodeon, the song began to come, to gather headway. Then the screechy little organ played out; but that made no difference now, the children's heads were up, their mouths open, and their voices rang clear and strong as the immortal Marseillaise held the Americans hushed in its grasp.

Another time I heard it sung. The singer was a dashing young chasseur in an American hut. The piano was going and hundreds of Sammies were milling about. Soon the player drifted into the French national song. Immediately the young "blue devil" sprang to attention; his hand went to his forehead in salute, and he stood like a statue as long as the music lasted. It would be well for us to learn this national reverence for our national songs. Then he leaped upon a table, cap in hand, and began to sing; the lad at the piano came on with the accompaniment; I never saw a more graceful, handsome, inspiring figure than this young dare-devil who had been through many a battle and carried the wound stripe on his arm. May he live to fight for

France until this war is done, his country free from the invader and the world made a safe place for democracy!

The situation is not all depressing for America, her prestige, her influence and her future effect. Marshals of France could not be met with greater respect and affection than our ambulance drivers during a big push, where they have taken the worst of shell fire with the utmost coolness. These boys are somewhat disgruntled at the taking over of their corps by the government. It was a necessary measure, no doubt; but they feel that they should be entitled to something better than a private's rank. They are, many of them, college lads, some millionaires, some of them very strong, mature and unusual men. Some are going into aviation, some into artillery schools and some into other units. I met one who had come over on the ship with us, a man of thirty, who formerly lived in Kansas City. He told me he had decided for the Foreign Legion.

I know a surgeon—he also came over on our ship—who is now in charge of the surgical ward of a big French hospital up near the front. I met him one day in Paris, and we sat for an hour in the Café de la Paix and talked it all over. America was about to expend a

quarter of a million dollars at that hospital; but transportation was the problem. The money could not go in there, unless this problem could be solved. The surgeon said nothing about the intentions of his government, but set about solving the problem. He saw a river close by. He conceived the plan of finding a steamer and somebody to run it. He came to Paris, made the search, found the boat and an old skipper and was going back rejoicing on the morrow. The money will go in.

I fear this chapter will sound to many discouraging. I do not wish it to. If it simply faces us with the cold facts, and leads us to arise and arouse, there is no people on the face of earth whose inventiveness and boundless energy can do more and will do more. After all, our men are very square bodied, big boned, trimly clad fellows. There are no bulging pockets in the skirts of their tunics, as there are in so many others over here. Their jacket collars may not be comfortable, tight up about their necks; but they give a certain neatness and soldierly air. As raw material one may admire them most heartily and be justly proud of them; but one has to remember, and nobody knows it better than their general, that they are still raw material

with their job to learn. He will not be hurried, either, into throwing their lives away before they have learned.

None of our enlisted men have thus far been allowed leave to go to Paris. They are very anxious for such opportunity. I was able to cheer them one day with the information that leave would be granted them as soon as the Y. M. C. A. was ready to open its Paris hotels. Such hotels have been secured and are in process of renovation. Another interesting order is one issued by General Pershing. It is especially so, in view of the fact that some of the army chaplains have been inclined to fight the Y. M. The order reads that the Red Cross is to have charge of all relief measures, the Y. M. C. A. of all social and religious matters and *chaplains will render all assistance in their power.*

XXI

THE SPECTACULAR ITALIAN FRONT*

ONE of the most important battle fronts in Europe is the Italian. It has, however, been regarded, for the most part, with a lagging interest until, last August, the tremendously successful offensive on Monte San Gabriele and the Carso Plateau was carried out. Then the world sat up and took notice.

Italy had been quietly working along with incredible industry against her age-long foe, Austria, and had broken suddenly loose with a big push that netted her chunks of important territory and a full army corps of prisoners. People began at once to say:

"Shouldn't be surprised if, after all, here is a vital point to thrust at the central confederacy. I'd like to see this Italian front."

I freely confess that this was my own attitude of mind. So I immediately applied for

*The writer sees no reason to alter these chapters concerning the Italian front in spite of recent events. There can be no doubt that a great opportunity has here been lost through lack of team play on the part of the Allies.

permission to visit the battle lines about Trieste.

Such permission was not difficult to obtain; for Italy is justly proud of her achievements and is rightly anxious that the world should know of them. So long has she prepared and labored in silence that, now she has begun to reap the fruits of her labors, she feels she ought to get the due credit for them. She is altogether right.

Everybody that knows Italy loves Italy; and she has had the sympathy of the cultivated world since the days of Metternich. Her heroes and patriots, her Garibaldis and her Cavours, have commanded the heart beats of all westerners outside of the Teutonic tribes for more than a century. Our Byrons, and Brownings, and Shelleys have shared the sorrows of Italy; and all who have the faintest tinge of their spirit are rejoicing to-day in Italian successes against her particular type of Huns.

Italy stands to come out of this war far greater than she went in. She resisted the Teuton attempts at blackmail, in the beginning of the conflict. She never once hesitated. Those who think she did, do not know her spirit.

Fancy Italians fighting side by side with

Austrians! It is enough simply to mention the two names in the same breath to know at once where they would align themselves. I remember thinking, five or six years ago, that Italy was making an effort, second-class power that she was, to pose as a first-class military nation, much to the taxation and suffering of her poverty stricken common people.

Time has but proven that I was wrong and she was right. Somebody in Italy was long headed enough to see what was coming, and to prepare for it. Now she will emerge, as she deserves to do, with her frontiers secured forever, let us hope, against the Vandal, with a people richer and stronger, more independent and happier, than they have been for more than a century.

We in America have been accustomed to think of Italians in terms of the Sicilian banana venders and organ grinders. If, by chance, we have "toured" the sunny land we may think a bit in terms of picture galleries and old crumbling palaces, painted walls and campaniles.

It is only when we have come into personal contact with her soldiers, officers, inventors, writers, administrators, that we begin really to know her. It is easy to forget that this is

the land which produced such brains and builders as Michelangelo, Brunelleschi, Giotto, Lorenzo the Magnificent, Bellini, Savonarola and a host of others.

The same kind of brains is there to-day, and is being turned toward construction of a diffent kind—the construction of a state. And, believe me, the foundations are being laid as firmly as the foundation of St. Peter's.

To say that one was astonished at the administrative and inventive genius of Italy in these hours of struggle is only to confess one's own ignorance or thoughtlessness. One ought to have known beforehand what to expect. Only, it is possible for others of us, besides the Germans, to make the mistake of believing that our neighbors are decadent or lacking in virility.

Because the Italian is, like his landscape, gentle, sunny, kindly, musical, easy going, is no indication that he cannot set great wheels to whirling when the need comes. You have but to see the swarming millions of soldiers back of her front and watch the smooth working of her machinery of supply and the incalculable industry of her road building, to awake to the fact that here is a noble and puissant people, rousing itself like a strong man.

Four million of men under arms! Almost as many as England and France hold on the western front. And not a man of them idle. The common soldiers in other armies may suffer from *ennui*—never the Italian!

The character of her leaders, too, deserves some thought. The courtliest and the kindliest officers in Europe, they are, at the same time, among the most efficient. General

Then there is the king. Victor Immanuel challenges comparison with Albert of the Belgians. I saw him, close up to the lines, driving back to headquarters, white as a miller, from the dust.

"What do you think of your king?" I asked one and another.

"Our king is one of the best," they replied, modestly. "He is like a president—he knows how far he can go, and no further. As it is, he goes into the front trenches, is all the time at the front. Rome never sees him.

"He talks with the common soldiers. He moves among them and asks, 'How goes it? How fare you?' We are well content with our king."

The king's cousin, the Duke of Aosta, is in command of one of the armies under Cadorna. We visited that army; and we visited the headquarters of a string of batteries, one of

which the duke's son commands. We had tea with the other officers, but the young nobleman was not present.

"He is with his battery," smiled the brigadier in command.

We could see that he was well pleased with his youthful captain, of royal blood; and we turned an ear of sharpened attention to the brisk cracking of the seventy-fives out to the left.

The people, too, seem united as nearly as any nation ever was that went to war, in support of their leaders. Oh, there are some dissatisfied Socialists, some confirmed pacifists, some corrupted of German gold, as in all the nations in this war, not forgetting our own; but the observer sees little sign in Italy to-day of aught but a determined, industrious and cheerful prosecution of daily life and of the war.

There is little or no evidence of the battle fatigue of France. There are not so many maimed and stranded, in sight as there are in England. Everybody has more work than in normal times, more money and apparently more food.

There is but one necessity of life that seems seriously short, and that is fuel. Coal costs more per pound than bread.

"What is bread per kilo?" I asked a government official.

"It is selling at sixty," he replied.

"And coal?"

"Oh!" he cried, throwing up his hands; for every Italian is a born orator, or actor, or comedian; they are all Salvinis. "Coal is anything! It is eighty, ninety, a hundred, a hundred and twenty! I had a friend who, last week, heard of a quantity of coal and went to buy it. A hundred and twenty was the price demanded. After long bargaining he got it at a hundred."

Almost twice the price of bread. Fancy running locomotives and factory engines with bread—no, not bread, but cake! Where would industrial Italy be without her Alpine water power? I walked through a humming factory in Milan, and suddenly it occurred to me to ask where they got their fuel to drive all these wheels and shaftings.

"Oh, it's electric, of course; water power!" was the answer.

"Of course," thought I. "If they were dependent upon coal all these wheels would stop."

Furthermore, Italy must import not only her fuel, but her raw materials. She cannot

furnish us with all the airplanes we would like to buy from her unless we send her the lumber and the steel to make them with. That is what is the matter with her depreciated *lire* to-day.

She imports all the time, and cannot sufficiently export. This state of affairs will right itself after a while, let us hope. Just as the presence of the Americans in France has actually sent up the price of real estate in Paris because we have needed so many hotels and other buildings and grounds for our uses; just as American money pouring into French small trades has brought a renewed prosperity to France; so, in time, will the American demand for supplies aid Italy to rehabilitate her coinage.

There is still another reason why one cannot wisely fail to visit the Italian front, and that is because it is the most dramatic, the most spectacular battle line in Europe. When you have seen the Flanders front you have seen it all, you might say, west of Switzerland.

The desolated villages are all alike. The smoking trenches, the rooting, grunting, hoggish shells, the mud, the dugouts, the *camouflage,* the crowded roads—it is all alike. True, about Verdun and Alsace there is some broken

variation of topography; and at various other memorable portions of the line there are outstanding bits, but in the main, when you have seen a part you find it but a sample of the whole.

In Italy it is not so. The Alps lift the whole line up and hang it in festoons over their shoulders. You can look down upon the enemy's guns, watch their fire, trace their projectiles, hear and see them fall and explode. You can stand behind your own guns and see the effect of your fire on a spot four miles away which, through the clear air, seems only half a mile.

You can see a whole battlefield tilted up on edge, hung like a picture on the wall. You can walk from peak to peak, or ride, and examine the field from different angles. You can look down beneath at the gorges where wind the silver mountain rivers, with their pontoons yet bloody from recent daring conquests. You can look face to face upon mountain precipices, up which *Alpini* have scaled like mountain goats, rifles strapped on shoulders and knives in teeth, in the fashion of the old days of chivalry.

Here, too, you can estimate the strength of a position, forty or fifty miles long, from a single vantage point. You can look at the

enemy's line and his reserve country and supplies, and his slippery foothold; then you can see your own, and look behind you at the crawling millions shoving forward, pushing, edging, inching toward a goal.

One is overpowered by the thought that here, on the Italian front, is, after all, the weak spot in the central empires' defenses. Here concentration of allied artillery and airplanes would turn the trick, smash through, break quickly like a mountain torrent out of the mountains, upon the plateaus, run away to Vienna and cut the central confederacy in two. This may be an amateur's estimate, but it is backed up by much good expert opinion.

The Italians have men enough; they need only guns and munitions. There must be reasons, in the jealous councils of the powers, otherwise this wedge would surely have been driven. Maybe America can lend a hand, if not in driving it, at least in promoting a more unified spirit among the Allies.

XXII

THE ITALIAN *COMMANDO SUPREMO*

THE approach to the *Commando Supremo,* as the Italians call the headquarters of their army in the field, is over the plains of Northern Italy and around the foot of the Alps, past a blue lake here and there—all country that Browning has painted for us, even to its grains of dust.

You go by rail and have the feeling that the Italian government ought not to be wasting coal on you. The carriages are jammed. Soldiers and officers everywhere, thickening in numbers as you approach the front. Civilians squeeze in and hold standing room by sufferance. If you desire a *wagon lit,* or sleeping car, you must take it a week ahead. As to meals, they come according to the old sporting rules of catch-as-catch-can. On the whole, however, it is wonderful that the railways get their trains through at all, crowded as are the lines with supplies, hospital trains, troop trains, and burning, as they do, fuel that is as precious as so much gold.

Be patient, then, if you are shunted off into

towns that you never expected to see. And if you are laid out on sidings while a train bearing the general staff or hurried re-enforcements goes tearing by, or if you lie in a station for an hour while a hospital train comes in and all the long lines of sufferers in the berths, whose marble white or cadaverous clayey faces you can see as you walk the platform—their bloody bandages, their upheld stumps of arms and legs—are served with tea or wine, be patient and cheerful, for these people, in their life and death struggle, are so.

At last you are winding on again, ten hours late it may be, but winding on through a country that reminds you a bit of the best parts of Mexico, with its life in the sun and the dust, its white walls, its golden fields. Here and there you see

"That dry green old aqueduct
Where Charles and I, when boys, have plucked
The fireflies from the roof above,
Bright, creeping through the moss they love."

Now and then you see a band of peasants, "dear noisy crew," going to work among the maize. Now and again you see a young woman standing in

"Our Italy's own attitude,
In which she walked thus far and stood,
Planting each naked foot so firm,
To crush the snake and spare the worm."

Then there are the children, shoals of them. Are there any such children as the Italians have? Big dark eyes; round, rosy faces; Raphaels' and Murillos' cherubs and fruit boys. I am sure such beautiful children, in such profusion, flourish nowhere else on earth. An officer said to me: "Our army came. Now are there plenty of children."

I was surprised at the rice fields. Somehow I had never gotten it through my head that Italy grew rice in quantities. But there were the canals and irrigation ditches cutting the fields; and there was the crop, gold ripe, and being cut, acres and acres, miles and miles of it, and there were the threshing floors—great circular, hard-beaten spaces on the bare earth, with the grain in piles around the edges, and the flails beating, the dust rising in the middle. Surely Italy cannot be hard put to it for food this coming winter. She may shiver, but she cannot starve.

Furthermore, there were the mulberry trees, great orchards of them, Edens for the silkworm, who is pampered and nurtured, cared for as sedulously as if he were of royal blood; and royal is his product of Italian silk. But somehow Italy must turn that silk into wool for the winter months. We must help her solve the problem of transportation and lighten

for her, if we can, the burden of the coming cold.

All along the way are grapes, pears, peaches, plums, flowers. It is good to be in Italy in late summer, if only for the delicious fruits and the glorious flowers. One may live on fruits at this time of year, a most wholesome living. What a happy country if it were at peace! What a sturdy country while at war! I was not cut to the heart, as in France. People seemed cheerful, seemed to walk with a springy step, seemed confident of the outcome, seemed to have no doubts or disunion among them. Italian soldiers seemed to go to the front with a song in their hearts, if not on their lips; and Italian women seemed to remain behind and sing.

You think of Italy, anyway, as a singing land; and you are not wrong. I heard voices out of the troop trains which could have done justice to Mario's song "that could soothe, with a tenor note, the souls in purgatory." I heard a woman's voice, somewhere in the headquarters town, one morning, echoing through the courts and over the housetops, that was worthy to ring out in La Scala, at Milan. I heard duos and trios in the camps that could have rendered the daintiest bits of Verdi and that brought back memories of

years ago when street boys in a town of South Italy stood under a window at night and soothed and serenaded a fevered patient. Sing? Of course Italy can sing. You can't keep her from singing. She is the home of the silk and velvet tone; and, like the fabled nightingale, she sings all the more sweetly, if more poignantly, for the needle in her eye.

That town of the *Commando Supremo,* Udine, is a dream in the moonlight. The main "place," or square, or as Mexico would say, the plaza, is broken in skyline with Venetian shadow almost Oriental in effect. Arch and colonnade border it, and great stone fountains and columns break it. There is no light but the moon, for bombing airplanes visit it now and again. Every window is heavily blinded; and thick wool or leather curtains hang over shop and café doors. The place swarms with life, and you are lucky to have the services of obliging Italian officers to find you accommodations. Nevertheless, you cannot help thinking it would be pleasant to spend the night in the open, under the colonnades.

It is time now, however, to get to the front. You get there fast enough when you start, I warrant you. I thought the French and British soldiers bold practitioners with the motor car; but they are not one, two, three

with the Italians. Talk about Jehus! But, then, they have the roads, and they have the engines, and they have had the experience to train up a race of daring but skillful chauffeurs. At first my hair stood on end; then I grew accustomed to the pace. Dust glasses were essential. We were the head of a comet, whose body and tail were one long kilometer of white dust; and we were charging at other comets, passing them and merging into their tenuous tails. Our Klaxon was going all the time, and so were other Klaxons; nor were they like any others you have ever heard outside of Italy. They were like Brobdignagian canary birds, with a shrill and insistent chirp that split your ears as well the wind. They were not less impudent than the dog bark of American Klaxons, but far more penetrating and weird.

We swept past the old Austrian frontier, past the building that used to be the custom house, and into the conquered and occupied ground. It was a delightful sensation to be, for once, on the other fellow's soil. All other battlefields and front lines are on the lands of our Allies. Now to be rolling forward through towns and villages—some three hundred of them there are in all, with a total population of several hundred thousand—

that used to belong to the enemy, was most refreshing indeed. We began to understand the good cheer and the confidence of the Italians.

"Yonder is our rightful frontier," cried the captain with us, pointing away to a range of mountains to the north and east. It was plain as a pikestaff, too, that he was right. No nation could be content with those mountains in the hands of a bullying, hereditary enemy, forever frowning down upon defenseless plains.

"Do they hold them now?" we asked.

"Only in part," he answered. "We are winning them. They are half ours already."

We came to a pause at a divisional post, and strolled through an ex-Austrian town. In the square was a bronze statue of Maximilian, with a wonderful inscription. Hang that British sergeant—that Durham coal miner—who stole my notes. From memory, the inscription runs:

"In honor of Maximilian and the eternal union of these counties of Gorizia and—something else—to the House of Hapsburg."

That eternal union is like the eternal union of Maximilian and Mexico. Eternal union! Methinks he doth protest too much, said Shakespeare. The inscription was all plastered

over with General Cadorna's printed notices to the people, but a friend supplied it to me.

The names of streets in all these towns and villages were Italian. The old Austrian names had been torn down, and new and more appropriate ones supplied. Much of the damage done by bombardment had been repaired; and these indefatigable swarms of Italian ants were hard at it, in many places, erecting clean, white new buildings. Still it was odd to see Austrian names and advertisements over the doors of many shops which were open and doing business.

Soon we began to climb up, up, round and round, doubling on our track, but always up. The roads were now under camouflage and the batteries barking around us, under us, above us. Sausage balloons came into view, outlining the battle fronts and hanging where we had never seen them before, over mountain tops. Shells began arriving from the Austrians; and Italian shells began departing in exchange. We were again in the thick of it. But no steel helmets were served out to us and no gas masks, as on other fronts. The Alpini go gaily into battle in their woollen caps; and the batteries are served by Italian soldiery, at least half of whom were without

the "tin hats" that one expects to see in the lines.

All kinds of transport were around us, cameons, carts with horses and mules, pack asses and even yokes of oxen. They say that one indication to the Austrian that Italy meant war was the massing of oxen on the Gorizia frontier. It seems odd to see great sleepy white beasts like these in the panoply of modern machine made war. Repeatedly the traffic got jammed. We would swing round a sharp curve with a precipice going down hundreds of feet on the left and sheer rock going up hundreds of feet on the right and butt into a puffing, struggling mass of vehicles and men trying to go both ways. We would, with the uncanny skill of our driver, wind in among them and worm through.

At times we would halt the cameons to let us by; and then I felt guilty, as doubtless did the others, that we should stop, for a single instant, the progress of this war to let by a bunch of civilian drones. Yet, after all, the *Commando Supremo* must have felt that it was worth while; that we, in a helpless, feeble way, with mere words, might do something to help the good cause along, else they would not have been at such pains to make a path for us.

For the most part it was marvelous how well organized and expedited was all this traffic. The most crowded front in Europe! Four millions of fighting men on a line not over a hundred miles! Yet we saw no cameons stalled by the roadside. Yes, we saw two. One of them had slipped off the road above and had fallen in a sitting posture upon the other on the curve of the road beneath. Of course, the underneath one looked embarrassed, crushed as it were; but busy little men were at work engineering it out, and the eternal stream of the traffic hugged the hillside and crept around. When, in the early days of the war, long lines of motor trucks were speeding with munitions toward the front, no time was wasted upon any one cameon that got out of commission. They simply shoved it into the ditch and sped along, until leisure could be found to give it first aid. So was it in the summer's offensive. They are good organizers, these Italians.

Monte Sabbatino, on the left and Monte Podgora on the right as you approach Gorizia, are like two pillars of Hercules that frame the fighting ground leading up to the Carso. Between them the eye can sweep over the valley of the Isonzo with the city of Gorizia on the banks of the blue river, over Monte

Santo, like a Franciscan in a brown cassock and hood, which the Italians wrested from its defenders, over San Marco and San Gabriele, where the trenches of both sides wind, like yellow snakes and seem almost to intercoil, so close are they, and on to the Hermada, the great fortified mountain ridge on which the Italians have their eyes, as the last bar to the road to Trieste.

Can they take it? Of course, they can take it, if we lend them a hand; take it they will, and with it Trieste, the beautiful prosperous, more than half Italian city, where Cunarders used to sail for America, and where in a certain tower, Richard of the Lion Heart was once a prisoner, lost to the world, until his squire, disguised as a troubadour, went through Europe singing an old song his master knew, until the song was answered, the king found and brought to his own again. So also will Italy sing, and, pounding on the gates of Trieste, half-troubadour, half-soldier, bring back to her bosom what belongs to her, many a son and many a daughter who have long endured the bitter Austrian rule.

XXIII

THE INDEFATIGABLE ITALIAN

THE most remarkable achievement of the Italian army is not the driving back of the Austrians from mountain top to mountain top, from gorge to gorge, off the summits of sheer cliffs, across foaming rivers and rocky plateaus—though all that is remarkable enough in all conscience. The most daring and indefatigable thing they have done is the building of good wide roads over all this impassable terrain. Talk about hairpin curves, they are hair raising and hair curling, those curves. My ears bubbled constantly with the increasing altitude, and my flesh crept as the skillful drivers rimmed the cliffs with our tires; and we could look down fifty feet of rock to where we had been a minute before, and up fifty more to where we would be in another minute.

These roads are all new; for the Austrians had not troubled to build them, having never dreamed that the Italians would attempt the impossible, and push them off these heights. Originally, there was one rough highway, for example, leading down to the Biansizza

Plateau, and a straggling goat path or two. In eleven days, the swarming Italians constructed a beautiful wide highway, winding down in the fantastic curves of a cotton string dropped and festooned at random, apparently, over the heads and shoulders of the Alps. If Napoleon can wake up in paradise—or wherever he is—and look upon these achievements, he must feel like the man from Johnstown comparing notes with Noah. If you could see these roads, you would at once understand the remark made in a former chapter, that the Italian soldier is never idle. When not in the trenches, he rests by building roads; when he has no other definite and immediate task, he builds roads; when convalescent, he builds roads; and when he wakes up at night and can't go back to sleep, he just steps out and builds roads.

Think, too, of the heritage left to this country, when the war is done—a whole circulating system, sending life blood and development into mountain fastnesses that have been locked up since the glacial period from all but the tread of goatherds and a few daring vine dressers. Do not imagine, either, that the country is barren, desert, lifeless. The most beautiful silva clothes the hills. I noted beeches, elms, oaks, maples, chestnuts, cedars of various kinds; there were buttercups, blue

harebells, life everlasting, and many dainty wild flowers new and strange to me; I saw fields of hay so nearly perpendicular that I am sure the farmer must have used telegraph climbing irons when cutting the crop. The haystacks were stuck on to the hillsides with gigantic hatpins to keep them from sliding down; and an Italian told me he had seen a cow which slipped and rolled out of the farm into the gorge below and became mincemeat at once. Nevertheless, these mountain sides can be and will be lumbered and farmed. The roads are now there to make development possible; war leaves some good things in its wake.

Yonder is the bald face of Monte Nero, or the black mountain, overlooking Tolmino, lying in the valley at its foot. The Austrians still hold Tolmino, and we can look straight down into it from above; but they no longer hold Monte Nero. It seemed impossible that the Italians would ever try to scale it; but one night a battalion of Alpini, climbing all the night, the last few hundred yards barefooted, came at dawn upon the Austrian trenches, lightly and sleepily held; and the garrison surrendered at discretion. It was a feat more unimaginable than anything Wolfe ever dreamed of at Quebec. I stood and gazed at that black mountain, while they told me the

tale, and felt like the farmer looking at the camel and saying incredulously: "There ain't any such thing."

We rode into Canale, all shot to pieces, but still the semblance of a beautiful mountain city, forever ice bathed by the blue Isonzo. We crossed on the very pontoon bridge thrown across under machine gun fire by the indomitable Italians. We saw the ford, lower down, which was too gun-swept to attempt; and we saw the lower pontoon bridge, the first that the conquering army succeeded in getting across. This spot was well guarded with Austrian machine guns; and at first it seemed impossible ever to put a bridge over, but a young colonel of engineers, who had been manager of a porcelain factory in Milan before the war, thought out a way. One night he massed his searchlights in the side of a cliff overlooking the Isonzo, and focused them all night upon the Austrian machine gun positions. The gunners were blinded by the glare, and the Italian engineers—*genii,* they are aptly termed, in their own language—slid their pontoons down into the river and built their bridge; while the Alpini did the rest.

We scaled the face of the Carso, winding back and forth on the new roads; and, reaching the summit of the cliff, looked away over the great plateau to where Italian shells were

bursting black in the front lines of the enemy. The face of this cliff was stormed eleven times by the persevering infantry of Italy before a foothold was finally achieved. One particularly sheer precipice of rock I noted, which to me looked impregnable; but the Austrians had been driven away from it, for they showed me a little gash at last, running up through scrub cedar and oak, where the climbers had wound their way by night to fall at dawn upon the Austrian flank. Italy certainly deserves every foot she has gained, for she has done it at an immense cost of sweat and blood.

Then we went to the seashore and saw the ship that had been taken by cavalry. True, she never had been launched, but she was really a ship, the only ship in history captured by a troop of horse. She lay in the dry-dock where she had been built and was just ready for her wedding with the sea. Now she is like a bride dead on her marriage morning, her veil yellowing around her. She is a mass of rusty iron, even yet beaten at times by spiteful shells.

We looked down into Trieste, on a perfectly clear, cloudless day, and saw the city, the Italian objective, lying fair in the afternoon sun; while, between us and her, frowned Hermada. That doughty fortress was receiving blows on the head even then. More blows

will rain upon it. Italy has men enough. If only the rest of us could fill those men's hands with guns and munitions, she could smash her way through to Vienna and cut the central Confederacy in two. Why it is not done is beyond me. Nobody visits this front who does not see that here is the place to strike a blow below the belt at Pan-Germanism. Here is the middle of that broad zone which Germany hoped to stretch from the North Sea to the Persian Gulf. Cut it in two at this, its most vulnerable spot, and Pan-Germanism falls like a house of baby blocks. Says one, this mountain fighting is impossible for any but *Alpini;* and there are only a few regiments of these, Italian and Hungarian. But Italy has already fought her way out of the mountains. She is already on the Carso, which is open plateau. Says another: Transportation is the difficulty. The powers would pour in supplies if they could get them there. Well, they got them somehow to the Dardanelles. Italians have already overcome difficulties of transportation, beside which the difficulty of our supplying her pales into nothing.

Says still another, Italy does not wish to go to Vienna. She aims at Trieste, and nothing more. Besides, the other powers are jealous of Italy. They cannot unite upon a campaign on this front. Now you are entering upon the

secret domain of high international politics and intrigue, which has been the curse of the world, and where I cannot follow you. For myself, it looks to me as if the time and the place are ripe for a bit of Uncle Sam's shirt sleeve diplomacy; it even appears to me that, having no ax to grind, no private ends to serve, one of the most valuable functions our nation can fulfill, without assumption or immodesty on our part, is to attempt some unification in the plans of the Allies, some mitigation of international jealousies. Our first move should be to declare war on Austria, then, with Italy and England, the rest might be arranged. Still, all this is not in the province of the reporter; and I beg everybody's pardon, especially that of the high diplomats.

Let us go back to reporting. We pause in front of a field hospital. It is under a cliff, within easy shell reach of the enemy. Indeed, it is frequently shelled; and they show us how they have hollowed out a hospital in the rock, behind this one, to which, upon need, they can move. At present it is unoccupied, these galleries in the living rock, the stony heart of Mother Nature; but they are ready, provided with beds, and even electric lights, ready to receive the refugees who already hang between life and death. I pass into the ward. Only

the worst cases are retained at this advanced post, those who must be operated on at once, to save life. They are the stillest and the sickest looking bunch of men I ever saw. Some look dead. Some are dead. Yonder in the corner lies one with the sheet pulled over his head. He was an Austrian prisoner, but they did all for him that they would have done for an Italian. There is a dead soldier of Italy in the middle of the room. He has just died, but the others are all too ill to pay any heed. Some lie with open mouth and half-open eyes; flies crawl over their lips and faces and even between their parched lips. Yonder is one just off the table, a bloody bandage about his head. An orderly slaps him, not very gently, upon the cheek to awaken him, but he will not awaken. He mutters thickly and drowses on. I don't know why they should disturb him, but I suppose it is wise; chloroform is used here, and perhaps that is the reason they disturb him; or perhaps these brain cases need this method of procedure.

The worst of the cases here, however, are abdominal. There is a man shot through the intestines, operated upon three days ago, and doing well. He smiles, in a sickly way, as we approach him, and tries to nod his head. Evidently his fever is still high. There is another

from whom a yard and a half of intestine was cut away twelve days ago. He will get well, and he knows it; you can tell by the sort of pathetic triumph in his eye; but he is too weak to speak; his smile, however, is a bit more assured. We go out into the air. I was more depressed than ever before in a hospital ward.

We pass into the operating room. The black-bearded surgeon is scrubbing his hands with yellow soap and iodine. He comes to the door to meet us, and smiles most affably. How I love these Italians! He cannot shake hands. He cannot talk English; but no matter. A great man's heart shines in his eyes. On the table lies a soldier, just brought in. He was shot within the hour, with a rifle. The ball went through his abdomen, and out at the back. He lies there, and I see the clean round wound. He is making no moan; but his stomach rises and falls with suppressed excitement and quick breathing. The surgeon covers his own face with his gauze mask, and his assistant places the chloroform mask over the patient's face. I should like to pause and watch the operation; but they call me away to look at the X-ray machine, the sterilizing apparatus and the other up-to-date appointments.

I learn that about thirty-five per cent of

these abdominal cases are now saved by this surgeon. I have heard of forty per cent saved by the British; and one French surgeon claims to save fifty. It is difficult, however, to convince me that any of them can outdo these Italians. I hear that this surgeon is dissatisfied with his ward, wants things more beautiful and bright. I learn, also, that the Frenchman who claims fifty per cent drapes the walls of his ward in red, puts flowers about and Japanese lanterns, and insists on smiles, laughter and jests from all his attendants, declaring that half the battle is fought in the emotions. Is he not right?

Under this same hill, cheek by jowl with this Italian post, is a British Red Cross station. They are unloading an ambulance at its door now. Two, three, four patients are carried in. The last one is holding his shattered, bandaged, bloody leg up off the stretcher with his own hands, bending upward with head and shoulders as he does it. God, what pain he is in! But only his face betrays it, no moan. I am somewhat benumbed with sights of blood and wounds; I have seen so much of it, through the months, but my latent emotions are stirred at the sight of these Englishmen here. Unfit, for one reason or another, to bear arms in their own trenches, they came

way off here into distant mountains to lend a hand to brothers in arms.

What is the strange chemical quality of this English blood that it drives men out from home and native land, away from love and hedge row, park and country house, to the ends of all the earth in peace and war? They go to farm and colonize, to lead the backward nations, to build and mine, to explore, to fight, to hunt, to roam. This queer chemical, it seems to me, is destiny, the power of empire building, the genius of the management of men. It is a thing not understood by the Teuton, not possessed by the Gaul, wholly baffling and strange to the Latin. It is the lonely, heroic quality of the pioneer, that settled and subdued our own country, that opened Africa, that leads jeweled India docilely by the necklace, that holds the Nile in the soft, strong hand of a dominion of which the Egyptian is scarcely aware. I stand and gaze at these English stretcher bearers, and say to myself: "Hello, brothers! After all, none of these other races are quite like you. We are sprung from the same stock, you and my country. I understand the strange compulsion that brings you here. A thousand years of health to you and yours! A thousand years of brotherhood between yours and mine!"

ENVOY

THERE are certain things that it is well to keep in mind in these war times. Our philosophy must not come tumbling down about our ears.

No one of us but would rather go out into France and risk his life, or lose it, than to have his boy do so. This is true of any father who is a real father; and if it is true of an earthly father in his feeling toward his son is it not doubly true of our heavenly Father in his love for his children? Let nothing persuade us that God is a cruel, heartless, or even indifferent God just because there is a war on in the world—or pestilence, or famine.

There would have been just as much suffering without this war as with it, there would have been just as many deaths for as Shakespeare said:

> "All that live must die
> Passing through nature to eternity."

There would have been just as many widows, just as many orphans; there would have been just as much physical pain—I rather think more—only it would have stretched over a longer period of time, twenty or thirty years instead of being condensed into four or five or six short ones.

This does not solve the problem of evil. We shall never solve it until we pass behind the

veil and see eye to eye and face to face. God could have made a perfect world, an Eden of a world, with nothing in it but innocent flowers and song birds and innocent Adams and Eves who wouldn't know the difference between right and wrong; but he could not have made that kind of world and at the same time given you and me the right to choose, to shape our conduct for ourselves. And as for me, I wouldn't care to be an innocent little flower or bird or Adam or Eve with no sense of responsibility and no freedom of choice. I would rather be a man, shape my conduct for myself, make mistakes, sin, fall, hurt myself and cry, and then get up and go on to struggle, to fight, and to win out in some sort of battle. I wouldn't be an innocent.

This does not solve the problem of evil, we shall never solve it until we pass over to the other side; but be assured that behind the war-clouds which lower so heavily over us, and will grow heavier before we are through, sits God within the shadow keeping watch above his own. And there is not a mother's heart torn and bleeding for her boy, not a father the chambers of whose soul are empty, echoing, yearning and void, there is not a soldier who falls like a sparrow to the ground, without our heavenly Father.

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