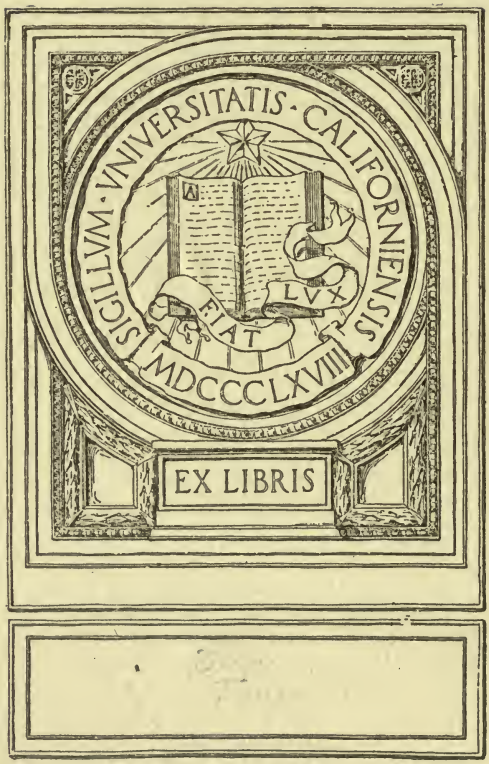
SHAKING HANDS WITH ENGLAND

CHARLES HANSON TOWNE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BY

CHARLES HANSON TOWNE

AUTHOR OF "THE BALFOUR VISIT", ETC.

NEW YORK

GEORGE H. DORAN COMPANY

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TO THE FRIENDS I MADE IN ENGLAND

AND TO

LIEUTENANT CONINGSBY DAWSON
OF THE FOURTH CANADIAN ARTILLERY

I DEDICATE THIS VOLUME

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Two chapters from this volume have appeared in *McClure's Magazine;* and the poem "The Hammers of the Clyde" was printed in the *Glasgow Herald;* "To England: 1918," in the *London News*, and "The Unknown Dead," in the *Saturday Evening Post.*

FOREWORD

Since the great World War began, and the newspapers have been so thrilling, I often look back and wonder what we used to read. Is it possible, I say to myself, that the Thaw case could ever have held my interest? Did the gubernatorial election or the passage of the anti-horse-racing bill really absorb me? The mysterious disappearance of a girl from New York—is it possible that we breathlessly read the headlines of a morning—yes, and of an evening too—to see if she had been found, dead or alive?

The world has indeed moved since those days; and I wonder if we can ever drop back into the era of locally sensational newspaper headings. Has our appetite for news become so whetted that never again will a single murder case hold our attention at the breakfast table? You remember Horace Walpole's remark that he could scarcely wait for his daily journal, since news of fresh victories was literally brought in with the toast. How tame his day was, as compared with ours, and how little cereal he would have consumed had he been living now!

But just as we woke up one morning and found the world at war, so we woke to find it at peace; and

as we adjusted ourselves to the tragedy—exactly as one adjusts himself to an invalid in the house—so we will fall back, through some fortunate process of nature, into the old ways now that the terror and pain and grief are over. Only, there will always, for this generation, be the War to talk of; and the stories that come after the Great Peace will perhaps be the most absorbing of all: the little, intimate experiences of this man or that, cross sections of the tremendous drama that has engrossed while it has dismayed us all.

I have made no attempt to keep an accurate diary in the following pages, preferring to give a general impression of what I saw in England, Scotland and France in the latter part of 1918. I kept few notes, for I have never been one to go in for statistics. The human side of the struggle, its reactions on men and women I have met, has always interested me far more than a dull inventory of how many implements a certain factory turned out.

To Lord Beaverbrook, of the British Ministry of Information, I wish to express my gratitude and heartfelt thanks for the unusual trip which he made possible. It was a privilege to be in England and to see, at first hand, all that she has accomplished. She will not speak her own praises; therefore we on the other side of the world must tell of her wonder in the days when sorrow stood at her door. England the Magnificent—in that way I shall always think of her now.

A recent editorial in the New York *Evening Sun* reads as follows:

"It is recorded that of the 14,840 members of Cambridge University serving in the War, 2,382 have been killed, 3,154 wounded and 2,871 are missing or prisoners — a total casualty list of 8,407. This small item out of England's total serves well to bring home to us the frightful price the British have paid in their service in defence of the world's civilisation. Their total casualty list is over a million.

"The War has also taken toll at home. The *British Medical Journal* records that of 2,000,000 men examined only 36 per cent. were in good physical condition. Too little food, too much work, lack of comfort and amusements and the strain of the War brought this degeneration about. It will take years of peace to repair the damage. Let us never forget the debt the world owes to Great Britain."

No, indeed, let us never forget!

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TO ENGLAND: 1918

I

O England, our England (not yours alone, but ours)!
England of the iron coast, rich meadowlands, and flowers,
England that we loved indeed in those folded days
When the glad world lay at peace beneath the sun's large gaze,
England, now we come to you, seeing your red scars,
Seeing you encircled by the awful hosts of Mars.
Yet England, our England, undaunted still you stand!
And England, dear England, we press your burning hand.

II

O England, brave England, the years have brought you these:
Sorrow and War's mad alarms—undreamed-of tragedies,
And griefs that try the souls of men and test the lion's brood;
But England, firm England, you gave your youth and blood.
In agate endurance, in largeness of the soul,
O England, sad England, you keep your birthright whole.
And we who come as pilgrims to this your stricken land,
O England, our England, how well we understand!

SHAKING HANDS WITH ENGLAND

I

GETTING US OVER

IT was in August, 1918, that I went over to shake hands with England. Our party numbered thirteen; and although we boarded ship on a Friday, were convoyed at one time by thirteen vessels, and were exactly thirteen days on the ocean, we "got across," and did what we had set out to do.

Never again can we be superstitious. This War has knocked many silly notions out of our heads; and after the trials of the submarine zone the ordinary perils of the sea are as nothing.

I shall never forget that hot summer morning when we left the harbour in New York, going over to see what Great Britain had accomplished in this colossal grim business of War. Save for the fact that we went upon a numbered, rather than a named, steamer, and that we had to show all our papers at the pier, I would never have known that America

was fighting a powerful enemy. There were no friends to tell us good-bye, it is true; but we had said our last words, as so often before, at home, and it did not seem strange to board the ship alone.

But soon I found myself in a maze of soldiers. I had not known that we would have the luck to take a transport. There were only about three hundred first-class passengers on our boat; and of these, over fifty were nurses and about forty were Y. M. C. A. men. Every one was bent on a serious errand. We never missed the waving handkerchiefs at the dock; for soon we were to see thousands of hands upheld, signalling us good-bye. Our nearest convoy also carried troops, and as we sailed out into the river, a big balloon above us and several airplanes scouting over our heads, the boys on the neighbouring ship stood calling and waving to us. We were almost abreast, and in their brown khaki, packed on the decks as matches are packed in a box, they looked to me like an enormous brown honeycomb; and the booming planes above us were the bees, now flying away on the summer air.

In all, we had three thousand soldiers on this ship, and if Germany thought we were inefficient, she should have known that only a few hours before sailing the embarkation officer told me that we found ourselves thirty-eight men shy: that is, there was room for just that many more boys, and the nearest camp was telegraphed to send them so that we could go out with our full complement. There was no

waste. Space was precious. We filled it. And do you think those lads complained because they were packed so tightly in? Not a bit of it. Hot? Well, yes. But whimper? Never.

I talked to dozens, to scores of them, on the way over: lads from Idaho and Maine, Wyoming and Texas; boys with clear eyes and clean skins; boys with sweethearts and wives and children left behind; boys with German names, others with Russian and Italian names. Always they said but one thing—they were glad to be off on the Great Adventure; they were happy to do their little share to make the world a more decent place to live in. They took their discomforts in a spirit of youthful good-will. The food wasn't abundant, but it was good enough, and to cross the wide ocean when most of them had never been more than fifty miles from home until they went to their respective camps—that was the all-sufficient fact which made the whole thing worth while. It was too wonderful to be true. Most of them were inland lads, and the sound of the waves was a new music to their ears.

Those first magical moonlight nights on deck—they would never forget them. Even our prairie boys were bewildered; for marvellous as the moon is to one who has seen her from the vast stretches of our wastelands, she is still more beautiful reflected again and again in the endless mirror of the sea.

It was curious to see life-preservers all the time. The soldiers had to keep them on every moment, and

we other passengers carried them about, laughingly calling them "the white man's burden," until we were well out of the American danger zone—that is, three days from shore. A feeling of relief comes over you when you find you can get your breakfast without showing a life-preserver as a meal-ticket. And it isn't nice to see little children of three and four playing in the lounge, wrapped up in an ugly canvas scaffolding. You begin to think deeply of Germany's many crimes. You recall the *Arabic,* the *Sussex,* the *Tuscania,* but most of all the *Lusitania,* and when you first get into your hermetically sealed stateroom you ponder on the Germany that has made the difficult process necessary. But you never say a word, you never see a face on which fear is visible; but you wait for that early-morning hour when your steward goes out on deck and unseals your tiny porthole. It is the happiest sound of the day.

I confess without shame that before I sailed I had often said to myself that nothing—nothing in the world—would induce me to sleep in one of those stuffy rooms while U-boats prowled the seas below. My nerves would never stand the strain. Yet, so soon do we become accustomed to danger, that I took my clothes off that first night just as I do at home; and I have seldom slept more soundly. And every one else feels the same way. We were curiously unafraid. A few people slept on deck, but only, I think, to get more air—not through any sense of terror.

If Germany set out deliberately to make this world an uncomfortable place to live in—as of course she did—she succeeded. Is she proud of her monstrous achievement?

She made it impossible to smoke after dark out on deck. And of course every man resents that! Each exit was guarded by a soldier with a gun and bayonet. Thick curtains, drawn like those in a confessional, made a square box of the doorway, and in front of this, in the dimly lit passage, stood the tall figure of the guard when twilight came. With a lighted cigarette, you passed him at your peril! For the spark could be seen two miles away through a periscope. How bright, therefore, the stars must be to a U-boat captain! Yet I think his soul is not given to their contemplation or he would never be about his terrible business. One does not imagine murderers and thieves studying the serene heavens, despite Gilbert's witty lines about the "enterprising burglar."

As we got farther from shore, and settled down to the daily routine and idleness of a long voyage, I could not help contrasting this trip to others I had made in the sadly distant days of peace. Then every one dressed for dinner, and champagne flowed, the saloon was filled with laughter, and the Captain's table was the much-sought place of honour. There were serious discussions of the latest light novel, which probably was a picture of Newport society; there were dances and concerts arranged, and there

was probably an ambassador on board, an opera singer, a professional pianist, a celebrated actress, all going to Europe for a gay summer holiday, and all happy because of the jingling American dollars in their purses. They would come back in the autumn and make more. This summer they were going to Italy, next year perhaps they would "do" Norway and Sweden. And there was a romantic girl from Montana who wanted to walk through the Black Forest.

What blacker forest the whole world was travelling through now! That very phrase, which heretofore had seemed so beautifully fanciful, was now like a fearful stain, a symbol of all that was hideous and mean.

To-day, on our voyage across the water, there is no happy holiday to think of in England or Belgium or France. The Captain's table—there isn't any. He is too busy to be seen. He is on his bridge, day and night. What is social intercourse now? And you see the Purser only at boat drill, perhaps. And an evening gown, an evening coat—they are unthinkable. No red wine flows; for all around you at table are young American officers, with faces like cameos. They are straight and tall and lithe, and they hobnob with our English cousins—brothers now in the great world struggle—and the contrast is not to their detriment. You are proud to be an American too. The English officers are returning from the States where they have

been helping us in our training camps for almost a year; and most of them love our invigorating climate, our clever women, our hospitality. They tell you they hope to go back some day. Every other phrase is, "When this War's over I'll do so and so."

If you made friends easily on shipboard in the pre-war period, you make them even more readily now. People who would not have interested you then, strangely interest you now. Every one has had an adventure, at least an experience, in the United States which gives him plenty to talk about. There is more background in our lives. The exchange of stories is limitless; and tea-time becomes a different function, followed always by a thrilling lecture. One speaker—an English University man—says: "We confess that we in England could not understand, in those first fearful days of 1914, how America could remain neutral. Democracy was at stake. The gauntlet had been thrown down, the challenge given. We in England and France had to decide at once—it was not a matter of days; it was a matter of hours. In the twinkling of an eye we had to reach a decision between right and wrong. We had to follow an immediate impulse. It was a terrible responsibility. Then America, after waiting, after deliberating two and a half years, decided to come in with us. Your pregnant patience, we might have called it. Thereby you vindicated forever our necessarily swift judgment. Thereby you will make history prove that you—and we—were right."

We keep up our spirits, and we arrange entertainments as of old. But always they are for the soldiers, or for the nurses. And the debonair wit of other days is replaced by the man or woman who really has something to say, and whom the War has taught how to say it. "Out of the fulness of the heart, the mouth speaketh." If you were inarticulate four years ago, you suddenly find yourself a trained and fearless orator. I heard one woman speak who had never been able to speak in public before. She was magnificent. But she had looked on death in France and Mesopotamia; she had seen courageous deeds in Flanders and Italy; she had been torpedoed in the Mediterranean and left drifting in the sea, without a life-preserver, for three-quarters of an hour. The last thing she remembered was the sight of a hundred white faces on the surface of the water. No wonder she is articulate now! The old, humdrum days—for her, they will never return. For life has new meanings. She filled our eyes with tears as the ship lunged through the darkness. If we went down—well, others, thousands of them, had gone too, and we would be as brave as they. We would not falter if the crisis came.

And so the days and nights run by—with serious talks on our boat and that strangely beautiful companionship of our convoys, so that we do not realise that we are crossing the ocean at all. There is no loneliness. You recall in the old days how great an event it was to see a steamer? Yet now they are

all around us, and the sea is like a wide river, or at most a gulf, and you simply cannot get the feeling of the Atlantic. For happily we strike no storms. Instead, above us drifts another fleet—of cloud-boats—a vast argosy of silver and gold seems to be convoying us too, and the sunsets come with bewildering flame, with streaks of magenta and purple and sapphire pink. The west is banked with crimson sails and that great galleon of the sky bids us good night as it dips down the horizon line. The flags of heaven wave to us, celestial banners send out their signals, and seem to whisper that all is well. Yet underneath us who knows what peril may be waiting? We are safe to-day. To-morrow——?

I remember two soldiers who helped to make our voyage a delight. One played the piano, the other the violin. They had never been out of some little New Jersey village; but now, with heads shaven in a most unmusicianlike way, until they looked like plush buttons, they found themselves on the high seas, in the first-class passengers' lounge, playing for us every evening. Their real gift got them out of their crowded quarters below, for which they must have been secretly glad, and they rattled off snatches of "Over There," "Keep the Home Fires Burning," "There's a Long, Long Trail A-winding," the Intermezzo from Cavalleria, and—of course!—"The Rosary." One of them sang; and while we ate our meals his plaintive little untrained voice told us of "The Sunshine of Her Smile." He, too, had found

a means of expression—he who, during all his twenty summers, had probably never dared to sing away from home.

And I remember Frank I—— on the lower deck, a lad from somewhere near Buffalo, silent at first, but soon voluble when he found that I really liked his honest face. He had wanted to marry a few days before he was drafted, "the sweetest little girl in the world"—and she was, for I saw a snapshot of her which he pulled from next his heart. But he didn't think it would be fair to her, and he was hurried off to a Southern camp. He had two regrets: that he was still single, and that he had so little education. "I'm a first-class private—that's as far as I can go, I guess." But I told him of great men who had been less than he at his age, and perhaps not nearly half so brave; one chopped timber, and read good books on his way out to do it. "If you'll lay the emphasis on 'first-class' and soft-pedal the 'private,' I bet you'll come back a Major, Frank." His blue eyes danced. "Do you really think so?" he said. And I have since learned that he was made a sergeant almost as soon as he reached France.

The day comes when we are told to put our life-preservers on again, and boat drills begin in earnest. We are lined up every afternoon at four sharp, the roll is called, and it isn't well to fail to answer to your name. You learn the very seat in the boat where you will sit in case we are torpedoed, and some wag remarks that if the Boches were decent—which

they are not—they'd hit us while we are at drill; it would be so very convenient for us.

There is laughter even in the danger zone; and it is that spirit of comedy in the face of peril that will make us the victors in the War. Grim, set jaws—I saw none. We were all as happy as children; but never for an instant, I think, did we forget the tragedy in the world, and the possibility of direct tragedy for us. Yet laughter was our sword. What was to be, was to be.

But it didn't happen; and the morning came when nine little destroyers, bright, sturdy greyhounds of the sea, popped out of the mist to meet us. And I've never been happier to see any human being. They trotted along beside our hulking ship, like panting dogs, and they seemed to say, "We'd like to see anybody try to touch our master!"

Oh, we felt safe with them! And then the big dirigibles came out too, and we were doubly protected. The stern, beautiful Irish coast loomed out of the grey sea, and Scotland hailed us, and the Isle of Man, where there were a host of German prisoners, winked at us; and soon the busy Liverpool quays welcomed us in most friendly fashion.

We were safe at last. The bands on all the ships in the Mersey started playing, and American flags greeted us on all sides. Our boys cheered and sang. The journey was ended. The Great Adventure had begun.

Yes, indeed, they got us over!

II

FROM LIVERPOOL TO LONDON

I HAVE never seen Liverpool except in the rain. It must be a delightful city when the sun shines over it; but in the mist it always looks to me like a sad, middle-aged woman hiding behind a veil. She will put out her hand and grasp yours when you land at her docks, but she won't let you see her face. And it rather irritates you, for you imagine that she must be somewhat good looking. Her sombre garb begins to get on your nerves; and if it weren't for that pearl at her throat—the Adelphi—you would run away immediately you had shaken hands. But the Adelphi atones for a multitude of faults—it is without doubt one of the finest hotels in Europe—and so you sit around for a meal or two before you begin your journey to the English metropolis.

You go to the telephone booth, and find that while the service is not so regular, because it is war-time, it is, nevertheless, pretty good; and the neat little operator, or exchange, with whom, of course, you converse while waiting for your number, tells you that she has seven brothers at the Front. You say

to yourself, "Is it possible?" and you hardly dare ask if they are all still alive and safe. Your number is coming soon. Can you screw up your courage to ask this efficient young girl such a question? Suppose they are *not* all alive—what can you say to her? Something idiotic in the way of sympathy, and then rush into your booth. Would that be nice, or fair? This is your first morning in England in war-time, and you dread such a shock as, "No, sir; four of them were killed." So you say nothing more. And you never find out about those seven stalwart brothers; but you go on hoping against hope all the way down to London, that after four years of danger they are still above the ground.

As I have said, it was raining at Liverpool, and the weather didn't improve as we rushed through the country. But the English fields are lovely, even when they are wet; and the little box-hedges twinkled with millions of diamonds upon them, as they took their irregular ways through the green pastures. Rural England is a colossal checkerboard, and here Nature plays her game beautifully, with never a false move. The smoke curls from many a chimney, and the haystacks, neat as loaves of sugar, stand with unbelievable precision far as the eye can reach. Once in a while you see one that has been cleverly sliced, exactly as a ham is sliced in a delicatessen shop. What monster knife accomplished the miracle, and wouldn't you like to see the operation? You wonder again who did it, as you speed on your way, for

this country, in war-time, seems to contain no people. Only at the stations do you see anybody, and then they are mostly old people and children. Yet the fields are as tidy as ever, as carefully manicured and barbered as of old. "Who attends to them?" I kept asking myself. I was to learn later.

I could wish that the awful American habit of ruining our landscape with advertising signs had never taken hold of the English. To see "Somebody's Pills" splashed over our own Connecticut or New York countryside, where we are rather accustomed to it, is bad enough; but to find it in Cheshire, Warwickshire and Northampton is painful beyond words. It seems an anachronism for this staid and heavenly country to permit such gross modern legends to dot the fields. I remember that long ago Mr. Bok, in America, started a campaign to do away with the fiendish practice. Why doesn't some enterprising journalist like Lord Northcliffe do the same good work for England? We cut the thing down in the United States after it had grown to enormous proportions. It would be easy to nip it in the bud in England; for I am happy to say that there are still only a few such boards about. But why have any at all? The matter is scarcely one for argument.

We reached London at dusk—the same old crowded, bustling, thundering town, but now with uniforms everywhere. Uniforms! How long the tailors of the world must have been working during these recent years! What miles of thread, what

bushels of buttons must have been used! How many nimble fingers must have stitched rigid seams, and how many adroit fittings must have been accomplished! The professional statistician has a glorious field here. He could remain happy for the rest of his days, brooding over how many times the spools of thread used would encircle the world. You see soldiers walking down the streets everywhere you turn. It is the hour of khaki and blue, and you feel a bit ashamed that you are not wearing either colour. The pavements echo with the tread of thousands of booted feet; and then you think that if the tailors were rushed, how the shoemakers also had to hustle! For never before were so many pairs of boots needed at one time. Priceless leather! It has been in such demand that you cannot buy a travelling-bag now unless you pay double or triple the old price. But you don't mind, since leather is being utilised in the noble cause of making the road easy for the young men who go out to fight and die.

It was still twilight when we reached our hotel. If I had dropped in from another planet, ignorant of our history here, I should never have guessed that the biggest war of all time was being fought. At dinner the scene was as gorgeous as of old. The women in the great dining-room, against a background of golden mirrors and heavy silken curtains, were jewelled and coiffed in the latest fashion. Parties of two, four, six, eight, and even a dozen were all around us, and there was light laughter, the click

of glasses, and the curl of cigarette smoke. Had I not known, I would have said that this was a scene in New York, just before we entered the War. There was not so much noise, it is true, and there was no deafening jazz band; but there were the same rose-coloured lights, the same perfume and sense of festivity.

I must say that I was a trifle mystified. "How can this be?" I said. I had not dressed for dinner, as I had not thought it necessary.

And then I learned from a British officer who was with me, that these women dressed so beautifully, and appeared so gay, simply because, at every table, they were trying to look and be their best for their husbands, or brothers, or sons, who were home from the trenches. The British officer does not necessarily wear his uniform when he is on leave; so the many men in mufti deceived me. One might have assumed they were slackers, in their evening clothes; yet they were fighters with a vengeance. Thus can we misjudge our fellow men!

For a brief interval they were being given a glimpse of the London life they missed and craved; and the women were determined that they would do their part to make the evening lovely. After all, we would go mad if we brooded of the horrors of War every moment of the day. "And you must remember," whispered Major A——, who was with me, "that practically every woman in this room has lost some one very dear to her since 1914. She wants the

brother or son who is left to be as happy as possible now. She doesn't talk of her grief. But neither does she forget it. Oh, no! She hides it behind a mask of gaiety. And isn't that the saner way, after all?"

I think it is. And as I looked around the room again, I saw it with new eyes. I saw it as the soldier dead would like to have had it for their comrades who were left. The last thing a dead fighting man wants is a trail of grief for him. And the first thing a weary officer, home on leave from France, wants, is a swift forgetting of shrapnel and machine-guns. His friends—both men and women—see that he gets it.

III

WHEN LONDON WAS IN DARKNESS

I WENT out into the streets after dinner. I had heard of the hooded lights, the drawn curtains, the hush of this vast city after nightfall. For London was indeed in darkness; yet never had London been so light—spiritually.

One of my first recollections of the theatre is a melodrama called "The Lights o' London." I smiled now as I thought of that title. And a haunting little song of Le Gallienne's came to me as I stepped into Piccadilly:

> "O London, London, our delight,
> Great flower that blossoms but at night!"

Alas! that flower was shut now, as a morning-glory closes when evening comes, and only in the daylight was the town its old bright self.

The taxis, which usurped the place of the romantic hansoms, scurried along like big beetles, seeming to find their way about without the slightest difficulty. The crowds were as great as ever, but the theatres began at 7:30 for the most part, for they had to close promptly at half-past ten. That was the hour

when every light had to go out. There was no supper. Home was considered the best place in case of a Zeppelin raid. You didn't fancy the idea of being caught in the streets, with pieces of bursting shrapnel apt to hit you in the head. And though there were frequent signs reading "Shelter during raid," you were not sure that you would be in the immediate vicinity of these refuges when the signal was given.

London was amply protected against the deadly Zeppelin. I saw many of the anti-aircraft depots. They had been showing us how swiftly they could make ready for a raid, and we were deeply impressed with the efficiency and speed of the men.

"When did you have your last attack?" I asked one agreeable soldier, who had been particularly kind in explaining things to me.

He thought a moment. "Let me see, sir; it was at Whitsuntide, sir."

But I never could let him know that I was still as ignorant as when I asked my question. So, apparently very wise, I answered: "Really? I thought it was at Michaelmas."

As I walked through Regent Street, suddenly the black velvet of heaven was etched with two sharp, grey shafts of light. Then a third, a fourth, a fifth appeared, apparently from nowhere. You could not possibly trace the source of these beams, though of course you knew they came from the earth. They

mingled and met, like geometrical diagrams, finally focussing in one tiny spot high above me. The hostile aircraft that could get away with these ghostly beacons literally combing the sky for them would have been lucky indeed. They seemed to penetrate to the very gates of heaven, like giant magic-lanterns. No wonder the Zeps feared these lights that searched for them incessantly. I was told that after the last big raid, only one or two of the Boche machines got safely back; and since then they have not been so brave. It would have driven the Hun to distraction to see how indifferent the English people were to air-raids. They were scarcely spoken of all the time I was in London; and a certain officer told me, only because I asked him, that even during a raid itself every one sat calmly at dinner, or in the theatres, as if nothing at all were occurring. I know that is true, though I did not experience an air attack myself; for just as the French said, concerning anything unpleasant, *"C'est la guerre,"* the English said, when the Zeps flew above their heads, "It's the Huns," and went on talking of happier things.

On my second night in London I happened to dine at one of the better known restaurants with a young English officer who, slightly wounded, but now entirely recovered, was about to go back to the Front. To my surprise, the orchestra played Wagner; and I remembered how, just before I left New York, Wagner had been hissed in a motion-picture theatre.

"So you still tolerate German music?" I said.

"Oh, yes. Why not?" he answered. "You see, it's this way with us. We know the Boche are rotters in this War; but if, in the past, they have given the world anything that's beautiful, why not appropriate it now? They've taken no end of things from us, you know!"

But I reminded him of the great difference there was in hearing Wagner played in war-time by an English orchestra, and hearing him played in the United States by a German band. In one case it was done for purely esthetic reasons; in the other, obviously for propaganda purposes. "Music hath charms"; and I confess that if I heard the *Liebestodt* long enough, I would come to feel more kindly and forgiving toward the Germans—exactly as they want you to feel. You would be apt to forget poisoned gas in the high ecstasies of Brahms or Schumann, and you would say to yourself that a people who had been capable of producing such men should hardly be judged on the basis of Von Tirpitz or Count Zeppelin, the Crown Prince or the Kaiser. You forget the latter group while you are under the spell of the former; and in America it is only when a sleek Muck bows his acknowledgments of your spontaneous applause that you wake up to the fact that you have been duped. If the Germans played their own music while they asked us to feed them, I doubt if we could resist their appeal.

We had given up our meat coupons, and the waiter was bringing our chicken when I noticed five young British officers approaching the next table. They were as fine a looking lot of fellows as you would care to see, with profiles like those on Roman medallions. One of them was much shorter than the others; and it was only when the party broke about the table that I saw why. He was in a wheel chair, and both his legs were gone. Yet the smile on his lips—I shall never forget it; and he was telling a funny story as he pushed his chair to his place, and making his friends roar with laughter.

I turned away, sick at heart for him; and I am not ashamed to say that my eyes were moist. For all his future days would be spent in that chair—and he was so magnificently young and handsome. For a full minute my friend did not speak to me. Then he said (and remember that he himself was going back to the Front in a few days): "Look here, old man, if you're going to feel that way about the first wounded fellow you see, your visit to London will be a sorry one. For you'll see them by the thousands—you're bound to. And besides," he added, as he lifted his glass, "it's all in the game."

And my friend may lose *his* legs, or an arm, or an eye. "It's all in the game." Did the Hun count on that spirit when he began this atrocious War, I wonder?

There is another chap in London without legs, who lunches every day in a certain hotel. He has

a pal who fought with him in Flanders, but who was never even scratched. Promptly at one o'clock this pal carries the wounded man on his back through the crowded restaurant, and calmly and gently—as gently as a nurse would do it—dumps him into a chair. Then they laugh, and begin their meal; and there isn't a happier pair in all the great city.

These men never refer to their misfortunes. Indeed, they rather smile at them. I met one boy who had a glass eye, and he wore a monocle over it so that it would look humorous. He would have been the last person in the world to want your pity. He'd had hard luck. Well, he'd make a jest of it. What did it matter, after all? He had his other eye.

Never did I see a wounded lad coming toward me in the streets of London but I had a pang in my heart—such sturdy, clean-looking boys they were, and oh, so young to be hurt! But they would have told you they were only too glad to be alive, no matter what their wounds were like. If an arm was gone, I always rejoiced when I perceived that, fortunately, it was the *left* arm.

I saw a boy scarcely nineteen, badly shot up, laughing his bandaged head off at a farce one afternoon; and I wished I had been the author of that play, Avery Hopwood, that I might make a soldier, even for so brief a time, forget his wounds and scars.

One misty day I was riding on top of a 'bus, and

when the conductorette came to get my fare, she leaned over the seat in front of mine, and kissed the wounded soldier who was sitting there. I was the only other passenger; and, feeling that I would not understand, she said: "I hope you won't mind, sir. He's my husband, and I'm havin' him ride up and down with me on his Blighty. We want to see as much of each other as we can."

And she smiled, as the English always smile at their own nobilities. You cannot beat a people like that. They simply will not be downed.

They are the same people who go without sugar and butter and milk gladly; and in the theatres, at the revues, there were always jokes about rations; and the soldiers home on leave laughed as heartily as the civilians at any reference to a food shortage. On the programme there was printed a solemn notice about the possibility of an air raid, and what precautions should be taken; but no one read it. The time had long since gone by for that. Every one just enjoyed the show.

In Trafalgar Square you saw war bonds being sold; but how much more quietly than in America! The stolid British refusal to advertise themselves—even to themselves—obtained here. Some enterprising person suggested the firing of guns every day at a given hour so that a crowd could be collected; but the plan never went through. "No," they said; "if we can't raise money except through such spectacular means, we won't raise it at all." So the loan took

place almost in silence, right in the heart of the biggest city in the world; and it went well. British conventions were maintained, but the shillings and pounds poured into the Government's coffers with no shouting to make them flow. Isn't that the better way, when all is said and done?

On my third morning in London I received a note from an old friend who had left America for the Front early in 1915. He was an Englishman who had lived so long with us that he had almost forgotten that he had been born in England; but when the War came, the call of the old blood was too strong to resist. He is a writer; and in the old days he and I used to sit in my rooms and talk books by the hour. Little did we dream that a conflict like this would come upon the world. I recognised his hand-writing at once, and wondered why he was in England. Could it be that—— But this is what I read:

"I see that you are in town. I am wounded for the second time—in the head now—and I'm in the Prince of Wales Hospital. I'm lonesome. Could you, would you, come in and see me if you have a moment?"

Could I, would I? A taxi brought me to the door in ten minutes, and I took my place in the long line that was waiting to be shown up to those quiet rooms —rooms that had held so much agony already, and had witnessed so many heart-breaking partings. Yet they had seen goodness and mercy too, in the quiet

service of those wonderful women who devote their lives to nursing the sick. Perhaps my friend was not badly hurt. After all, he had been able to write me a letter. That was a good sign. And the other time he had almost lost his right arm. I remembered hearing about it; how he had told the doctors they couldn't cut it off, since he was an author, and never could dictate, anyhow, and simply couldn't learn to scribble with his left hand. And so he had his way, and the arm was saved. He might be quite as lucky now.

He was on a narrow bed by the window—a forlorn enough place—and his head was wrapped up with a turban effect. He was puffing a cigarette when I opened the door, and pretending to read a book while the other occupant of the small room—a leg case—was whispering to his best girl who had been there for hours.

How glad he was to see me! He, too, had a visitor—even though it wasn't his best girl. The score in that pleasant, harmless little rivalry between patients was not evened up by my call; but after all, there was a credit on my friend's side, and his face beamed. He glanced at his companion as though to say, "I'm not so friendless as you imagined. I, also, know some one in London!"

We had to whisper too; and he spoke of how strange it was to meet here, of all places, after four years of separation. What were the new books, and how did the Brevoort look? Were the girls on Fifth

Avenue just as pretty, and how did I like my new rooms, and the garden—oh, yes, he had heard of them through another friend, 'way off in the trenches. Were the latest plays any good, and was America feeling the War? How he would like to see the *Times* Book Review, and hear the gossip of the club, and loiter down Broadway, with a rabbit and a mug of ale at Brown's chop house with me after the show! How well I was looking, and——

Not a word about himself or his wounds! I couldn't whisper my questions as fast as he; but I managed to get in an inquiry at last.

"Oh, it's nothing," he said, and smiled. "I'll be operated on to-morrow, and out of here in a week. Look here, can't we have a week-end at Oxford? I'd love to show it to you."

He remembered that I had never been there, and how I used to like to hear him tell of the days when he was a student in one of the loveliest places in England.

There came a morning when he was out of the hospital, and he surprised me by driving up to my hotel, still bandaged, but debonair. I suggested luncheon at the Cheshire Cheese—a haunt that we both loved—and we drove there in the bright September sunshine. I have seldom had a better meal; and we had made friends, after the soup, with two English officers who shared our table. One of them had lost his leg, the other had been gassed; but the ale and the port were wonderful, and though the sun

disappeared and a typical wet London afternoon set in, we did not care, for we were talking of the War and of deeds of daring, and nothing mattered save that we were there in London, happy for a time, no matter what the future held. If you get soldiers together who have seen service, I defy you to be bored. Dusk came on, and we went over to see the spot where Goldsmith sleeps in the Temple—that place that always thrills me. And because my friends, new and old, were all English and I was an American, I had to show them the grave, for of course they had never taken the time to go there.

"Here lies Oliver Goldsmith."

Nothing else is on that tomb. What an epitaph! The rain descended, but we stood there, unmindful of it, with our hats off. And the organ in the chapel close at hand pealed out, and the high, pure voices of choir boys at practice came to us in the stormy twilight. "Glory to God in the highest," they sang.

Was it possible that only a few hundred miles away, cannon were roaring, guns were clamouring, and men were killing one another? What did life mean? Here were friendship and peace; a little way off were hatred and discord and alarm.

"At any rate," I whispered, as I turned away to get a taxi down the Strand, "here lies Oliver Goldsmith."

And my friend, Lieutenant Coningsby Dawson, of

the Fourth Canadian Artillery, said, "Yes, and how fortunate he is!"

In bitter contrast to the men on leave who have a wonderful holiday of forgetting in London, was the fate of the boy who, knowing nobody in the great city, came over to spend his furlough alone. He was the type—and I am happy to say there were many of him—that could not be trapped and ensnared by the women of the streets. I heard of one lad who spent two dismal days by himself in a small hotel—the best he could afford—and then became homesick for the Front, and went hurriedly back. The noise of London was as nothing after the furious bombardments to which he had so long been accustomed! He actually craved the companionship of his pals on the firing line.

I had an English friend in America who enlisted in December, 1914, giving up everything because he felt, as Dawson did, the tug at his heart for the mother country. He had lived so long with us that all his old associates in England had years ago disappeared. Indeed, he had come to think of himself as an American, yet when he realised that the bulldog needed him, he took a ship and sailed back to the land of his birth. He was like a Canadian, an Australian, or a South African; and, as Kipling once said:

"He knows naught of England who only England knows."

Men have rushed from the uttermost ends of the

earth to fight for Britain. He was one of them. It was not until December, 1915, that he got his first leave; and of course he went to London. He happened to arrive on Christmas Eve. Every Tommy, every officer, was met by his girl or his sister or his wife; but for him, there was no feminine face in all that happy crowd. Alone, he wandered up the Strand to the Savoy, where he ate a solitary dinner; and at ten o'clock he told me that he went solemnly to bed.

Have you ever spent Christmas alone? And especially in a great city? If not, you know nothing of this man's tragic solitude, with people swarming about him, with hurrying lovers going to some long-dreamed-of festival, and faces so lit with gladness as to be almost unearthly. He saw children and gay shoppers, and the clasped hands of man and wife in the ecstasy of Christmas companionship; yet when he saw his own face in a mirror which he chanced to pass, only his sad eyes looked back at him. All his friends were three thousand miles away, with a wintry ocean between. All his thoughts were in some cozy lodgings in New York, where his books and his pictures were now being enjoyed by a stranger. And he dreamed of a house-party out in the country, with soft snow, many a lighted window-pane, a roaring fire, and friends, friends, friends.

Bored to distraction, after four days and three desolate nights he crossed the channel for France. And when he got to his division, the men still there

thought he had gone mad. And he had—with loneliness.

Since then he has been badly wounded; and when I saw him he was honourably discharged from the service. He is one of the quiet heroes who never complained. He could fight furiously under shot and shell for England; but he could not bear to be lonely in her great heart.

These are the people who made London light, even in her darkness. Their great souls reached out in the night, and a flame came to your own. They gleamed and shone; but because they were as true as the stars, and as steadfast, you took them for granted, as you grow to take for granted all beautiful things. But their combined wonder made a glorious constellation; and London was never dark when they were there.

IV

GOING NORTH

THE day we went North to see the Fleet, it seemed to me that some celestial housewife had come out and swept the skies. And the cleanliness of heaven was reflected in the happy fields.

At a banquet on the previous evening I had heard some almost unbelievable statistics—which I cannot now remember—of the British farmer and his power to produce grain and beans in war-time. The island had become self-supporting almost over-night; and now, as I looked from my train window at the rich meadows and farms, as they rushed by, I was convinced that England would never starve, unless some visitation of the devil should occur—a famine, a pestilence, or the like. Never did a countryside look more prosperous. The earth seemed literally to smile at us; and the absence of human beings, of which I have already spoken, was the only flaw in the landscape. I had never realised before how much we miss *people*. I kept thinking of Goldsmith's "Deserted Village." But if I was to feel sad here, I had

tragedy waiting for my heart when I reached France. However, of that in its proper place.

Who was cultivating these farms? Was it done by some good fairy at night, as in the old legends? By what process did these fields blossom like Aaron's rod? Did gnomes come out at dusk from yonder seemingly deserted thatched cottage, and hoe and till the soil? Had *every one* gone to the War, and did the magical earth simply decide of its own will to do its bit at home, so that full crops might await the returned soldier, back on leave?

Question after question like this came to me; but I got no answers. I only knew that England was still radiantly lovely, despite the red holocaust of a War that had been going on for four long, terrible years. And I rejoiced in her abundance. But while it was pleasant to indulge my idle fancy, I was to learn later that no fairies performed the stern farm duties. This, as no one can deny who has lived during the past four years, is an age of frightful reality, an era of iron and steel and brass; and the plowshare is as important as the gun. With every male of military age gone from England, the women took up the necessary labour to be done in the country; but there weren't even enough of these who had been brought up in bucolic districts. Therefore, other women came to their rescue, young girls who had been gently bred in large towns and cities. They were eager and anxious to "carry on" at home; and they were doing so with remarkable success. They "hired

out" for, say, ten shillings a day, and they became the most adept dairymaids in little or no time. Only, they had none of the romantic experience of Thomas Hardy's buxom girls, for there weren't, alas! any young men about to flirt with them. It was simply hard, cold duty every minute, for we all know with what sharp precision farm work must be done. On the tick of the clock the cows must be milked, and the hoeing and the threshing must be punctually accomplished. How energetically these girls went about their business was an inspiration to me. I tell you they came nobly forward to England's assistance. And many of them, remember, used to be militant suffragettes, expressing themselves by smashing windows in London streets, or pouring a light explosive into mail-boxes. Perhaps they had to have an outlet for their emotions in pre-war times, or perhaps they were poor, hysterical beings, fit subjects for the pathologist. I do not know; but this I am sure of: it is far better to till the soil than to break glass, and it is nobler to be a 'bus conductor than a despoiler of the postal system.

One noticed how many women were in uniform all over Great Britain. Not to wear one was to be conspicuous. It was like a badge of service; and every one wanted to serve. A girl was either a nurse, a policewoman, a farmer, a conductor, or a chauffeur. The latter were as good mechanics as ever the young men were. They could do any repair work necessary around a car, and I have seen them put on a

tire in a few moments. And they haven't lost their looks, either. On the contrary, I should say that every woman in uniform, like every man, looks twice as well as in civilian clothes; and it may be, now that the War is over, women, remembering how well they appeared in their trim duds, will adopt some standard form of dress, and thereby practise a wise economy. Surely their soldier husbands, coming back almost penniless from France, would fall in heartily with such a scheme. Why can it not be done? The War is an excuse for many reforms. Let this be one of them.

We pulled in at Carlisle just at sunset. Here, at last, there were people! For it happened to be a Saturday, and every one, seemingly, was out for Sunday supplies. One saw rows of quaint shops, with plenty of red meat for sale; and when beef was not on view, shoes were. I had no idea there were so many feet in the world! And there was even a candy store, where, because I had had so little sugar for many days, I purchased some sweets—and mighty well worth buying they were. I think it was patriotic war candy—indeed, I know it was; for I took the word, as who would not, of the very pretty girl who waited upon me. Honey and syrup are just as good as sugar when it comes to bon-bons, and it is well that your throat, which does so much shouting in war-times, should live up to its preaching, and swallow only a patriot's food.

There is a fine old cathedral in Carlisle, which

has the distinction of being the church where Sir Walter Scott was married. Its tangled graveyard entranced us, and we could not help feeling glad that the Boche had seldom come so far north in their Zeppelins, to destroy this monument of the past. But of course the towns all through England and Scotland were kept as dark, or darker, than London. Indeed, all during my journey I became so accustomed to darkness that to see New York again with its honeycomb of lighted windows was an adventure, and for one or two nights I wondered if we were not taking chances. Our splendid isolation has saved us from the horrors of air raids. Until you saw the precautions our British and French friends had to take, you never appreciated our good fortune.

That night in Carlisle we went to bed early. There wasn't much else to do; for when a town is pitch dark after nightfall, you can't very well prowl the streets; and the one theatre closed its doors, of necessity, at ten-thirty. At midnight I was awakened by shouts in the street—our hotel was close to the railway station—and I got up, glad of any excitement in so quiet a place.

Down at the depot American soldiers were passing through, on their way to France. Somehow the women of Carlisle had learned beforehand that they would arrive at about this hour, and they had gone down to greet the train, and to fetch sandwiches and hot coffee and cigarettes. It did our hearts good to see the fuss that was made over our boys. How

happily their long journey was broken by this spontaneous demonstration—and the English are not given to such signs of inner feeling. I hope the lads from the States appreciated this. At any rate, I know that they appreciated the food and smokes. They were profuse in their thanks, and they cried out that they would personally lay hands on the Kaiser. "We're after old Bill Hohenzollern!" some of them shouted; and I think that practically every lad who crossed the sea to fight in this War actually believed he would have something to do with capturing the German emperor and putting him where he belonged!

People used to go to Gretna Green to see the old forge, and to revel in the recollection of all the romantic marriages the village blacksmith performed long years ago. Gretna isn't far from Carlisle, and part of the tiny town lies in Scotland; so runaway matches were popular there. Alas! it was not romantic love that took one there in war-time; it was stern, hard work. Three years or more ago it was decided to build a city of industry here; and in the twinkling of an eye the plans were drawn, the streets were laid out, and girls and men trooped down from Scotland, and began the manufacture of munitions. It seems inconceivable that such a village could exist where previously there were nothing but lonely meadows and glades. There were permanent dwelling-places, the inevitable gardens, a sewage system, a police force (though this seemed hardly neces-

sary), a hospital, a cinema theatre and dance hall, churches, shops—in fact, everything that goes to make a small, bustling, hustling city. Here, as in the country, every foot of earth is utilised; and I recall the church-yard which was filled with cauliflower plants and turnip beds instead of tombstones. How much better, I thought, to ask the good ground to contain something living rather than something dead. And how much more beautiful it was! Here is an idea for every town in America. Let us sensibly cremate our dead, and use the space heretofore given over to graveyards as gardens of the Lord, bright with green potato patches. I am sure we would all go to church oftener if we could have glimpses on the way of budding life instead of rows of depressing marble slabs.

I heard my first real Scotch dialect at Gretna; and the girls from up North who came down to help Great Britain in her factories, had the rosiest cheeks it has ever been my good fortune to see. The pale worker that we are familiar with seems to be unknown in England and Scotland. The young people looked as sound as apples. This may be a congenital condition, or it may have been due, in part, to the splendid ventilating and lighting of the plants I visited. Nowhere did I ever encounter the sour-vizaged employé so frequently seen in my own country. That may be because every worker in England was a Britisher—a clean-cut boy or girl who, particularly in war-time, had a real reason for help-

ing in the factories. Fired and inspired by patriotism, they worked with tireless energy. It was *their* country that needed them; and every nail they drove, every bolt they cut, every screw they turned, was just that much done for Great Britain. The service they so gladly rendered caused their faces to shine; and it is not too much to say that they reaped a spiritual reward which their eyes revealed.

There was much dangerous work done in Gretna; and yet I saw happy, smiling Scotch lassies walking about in shops with soft, protective fur shoes, as unconcerned as if they were going to do their shopping. And they had been doing this for over three years. If one fellow worker was the least bit careless, if one rule was disobeyed, they might all be in eternity. But they went singing about their jobs, and when the noon whistle blew they went laughing to luncheon.

And by the way, they were mighty well fed at Gretna. I saw plenty of roast beef and browned potatoes, bread and butter and cakes; and cleaner kitchens could not be found. The worker behind the lines, like the soldier at the Front, was well taken care of, as he should have been. The London civilian gladly went without his lump of sugar that some factory hand up North might have it. And no one lost caste by working in a shop. All classes bent their energies to the great task of winning the War, and you were as apt to see Lady ——, late of London drawing-rooms, at Machine No. 4, as you were to

see Lizzie Mulligan. And they would both be dressed alike, and eat the same nourishing food, and turn in at night with the same healthily tired feeling, after a peep at the movies around the corner from their lodging place.

While the factories were manufacturing bullets and shells, they were also turning out a new kind of democracy; and if the material which was put into one was as good as that which was put into the other, we need have no fears for the future. Labour has found out that the rich can work with a will; and the so-called aristocrat has made the joyful discovery that the so-called lower classes are as high and beautiful and noble as the stars.

VI

THE FLEET

WHEN I woke up on a certain morning in Edinburgh and saw that a typical Scotch rain was falling, I fell back on my pillow with a feeling of disgust. For this was the day planned for us to see the Fleet; and if ever I had prayed for sunshine I had done it on the night before. A bride never wanted a golden day more than I did; and I felt that the mist might have lifted for once, so that I could see the coast in all its splendour, our ships in all their wonder and glory.

But it was not to be. I groaned through breakfast, scolded through most of the morning, and was on the point of getting a reputation for disagreeableness that would have made Xantippe's wife a saint by comparison. As a rule, I don't mind rain; in fact, I love it, and I like nothing so much as to walk in it, properly dressed, without an umbrella, and feel its sharp patter on my face. I like the music of dripping eaves; and I revel in the sight of those slanting battalions coming over the hills, their bayonets shining, their helmets gleaming. Rain is romantic, martial, esthetically beautiful; and when it is accom-

panied by a cannonade of thunder, and illuminated by the calcium of lightning, it is the loveliest thing in nature, except calm summer moonlight. But to-day—I loathed and abominated rain. And it was always raining in Scotland. And why couldn't the Fleet have been in some cheerier place? Why did one have to creep through miles of mist to catch a glimpse of what should have been one of the finest sights of the War?

But when the little boat that took us up certain waters came closer to the object of our journey, I would not have changed the most brilliant day for this dismal one. For the effect was wonderful. You came upon that long line of dreadnaughts and battleships so gradually that you were scarcely aware of their presence. At first, a bridge, which seemed almost as long and high as Brooklyn Bridge, hung above us, like a cobweb that had been spun in the night, so frail did it look. We passed silently under it, and out of the distance emerged the lines of what appeared to be a fairy shallop—a mere shell resting on the heaving tide. Vaguely, and by degrees, I saw outlines of other tenuous shallops, so hidden by the mist as to be barely visible. Could this be the Grand Fleet? Was this the famous British Navy, reinforced now by our own, that was protecting the world, and keeping the vast seas safe? Could these fragile dreams be the reality I had read of? Surely this was nothing to be pitted against the wrath and strength of Germany. It was as if a butterfly, a grey

moth, had to save us all from the doom of a meteor. I was miserably disappointed.

But the line grew; the mist held it only for a time, and then released its close embrace. I saw, as we came nearer and nearer, that what I had thought was star-dust and butterflies' wings was massive steel and iron, a Gibraltar of strength and endurance, a miracle of solid achievement. This was no light, airy, ephemeral stuff that would vanish while I looked, but heavy, massive boom and spar, thick masthead and giant beam, girt by guns that would chant a louder song than that of thunder, and roar a deafening chorus if ever they were challenged to open fire.

It was as if a Colossus of Rhodes stood where a moment before a Lilliputian had been; as if, in one magic moment, I saw, in the place of the most delicate fern, the grey granite of innumerable sky-scrapers.

A Fleet to be proud of! Nay, *two* Fleets. For dozens of American battleships floated side by side with those of the British; and one felt again the wonder of the changes which this War has brought about. Here we were, together once more, forming another symbol of cemented friendship. Our battleships rocked in the arms of the sea on the British coast, ready, at four hours' notice, for action; ready to plunge forth with their sister ships, and eager to help them fight the good fight.

We got aboard one of our own big battleships.

The sea was running high, and to climb up the rope ladder was no easy accomplishment; for the turbulent water is no respecter of individual legs, and we had to scramble fast or run the risk of falling.

The decks were miraculously smooth and cream-white, and spick-and-span young officers stood on them to greet us and bid us welcome. We were, technically, on American soil the moment we stepped foot on those decks, and when you are three thousand miles or more from home, the thought brings you a curious comfort, a peculiar sense of gratification.

Standing in the snug engine-room of a battleship is like being miraculously able to stand in the complicated works of a watch. What first strikes you is the compactness of it all, and you are awed by the genius which crowded so much detail into so little space. And then you think how terrible it would be for this fine network of machinery to be destroyed in the fraction of a second by an enemy torpedo. To achieve this marvel of construction, and then have it burst into a million different directions, seems almost too awful to contemplate. The patience that went into this piecing together, far more wonderful than the mosaic-worker's pattern, is the patience not only of one brain, but of many. It is as if ten thousand spiders wove a monster web, only to have it ruined in an instant by one giant broom.

To be ready for active service night and day means that every bit of machinery, down to the smallest

detail, must be polished and oiled and tested, and every man must know the exact position he is to take, his own great or small responsibility. Life on board a ship like the one I saw is nothing but a perpetual dress rehearsal, with every officer and man aching for the curtain to go up on the real show. Can't you imagine how tedious it would be for a stock company to go over their lines interminably, and never have a performance before an audience, with all the critics present? The boys on these ships feel cheated. The army gets into action, but the navy, constantly alert, must bide its time, with no let-up in the knowledge of one's cues. "If the Germans would only come out!" you heard the men wishing. "How we long for a little excitement!"

You hear stories of heroism by the score—remarkable stories. Sir John Jellicoe it was who said that the British Navy would have to raise the standard for courage every week, else every man in the Fleet would be decorated.

This is literally true. I remember hearing of one young officer in the battle of Zeebrugge who had his arm severed by a shell. The nine men immediately around him were all killed; yet the last thing a companion saw of him, he was waving his other arm in the air, as a sign of encouragement for his remaining men to come on. An incident like this becomes so common that the hero is not even decorated. They are all valiant lads, and they will not tell you of their deeds themselves. You have to learn them

from other lips than theirs. If you draw a man out, by clever questioning, he invariably turns the conversation, and says nonchalantly, "Oh, we're only carrying on."

Once in a while you hear stories that the British and American army officers do not get along very well together; but if that is true in one branch of the service, it certainly is not true in another. The Navy is a place of lasting friendships. A cabin is a more homelike place than a dug-out, and it has a more permanent aspect; and when men visit one another in cozy rooms with swivel-chairs and sofas, book-shelves and shaded lamps, they somehow get better acquainted. I saw much cordiality displayed between our officers and the British. The deck of the battleship we were on had been the scene, the night before, of a gala performance, given in honour of the English, of "The Birth of a Nation." Two thousand men saw it; and to keep out the punctual Scotch rain, a huge canvas covering had been spread, with much pains; for nothing was too much trouble for our boys. They wanted everything to be as comfortable as possible for their visitors. On the British battleship which we visited, we found a reciprocal warmth of feeling for our men. They couldn't seem to do enough for them. The whole impression was of a vast family of males eager and anxious to live in the closest harmony.

After the War there is bound to be a solidifying of these bonds. Such friendships will not be forgot-

ten, for they have not been formed in a day. It is for us to insist upon a league between the two great English-speaking nations, to join our hands forever, and to patrol the seas as one country, keeping them open and secure. How safe the world would feel with such a domination of the ocean, and with what serenity we could face the years to come!

When America entered the War, England gave many of her ships for food, and went on rations. The scare about a food shortage in the British Isles in 1917 was due to the fact that the commerce of England had been diverted in order that ships might fetch over from the United States the staple products necessary to feed our armies. When our soldiers began to go to Europe, the convoy system was the solution of the submarine peril, and of the protecting ships, 29 per cent were American vessels, less than 1 per cent were Italian, and 3 per cent French. The rest were British. This large percentage of British ships, so used, made inroads on England's regular and dependable service for herself; but she never murmured. She gladly contributed her big share to help destroy the U-boat menace. How well she succeeded, time has shown.

Over and over, the praises of the British Navy have been sung, and we have been told of the glory of the Fleet, and how it has proved the salvation of civilisation. You do not have to see with your own eyes this stupendous line of ships in order to believe that this is so. But once you *have* seen it you never

can doubt again the strength of the lion and her brood. The very names of England's battleships are words of iron, and merely to repeat them brings courage to the heart. They form a litany of endurance in time of trouble. You know them well: *Invincible, Indomitable, Inflexible, Indefatigable, Lion, Tiger, Valiant, Resolution, Revenge, Renown* (now *Redoubtable*), *Repulse* and *Royal Sovereign.*

If language alone can thus give us fresh hope and firm belief in the power to win, how much more the steel ships themselves, when you have looked on them, make you utterly unafraid.

Of course no one would ever think of leaving Edinburgh without seeking out Number 17 Heriot Row. It would be like going away from Paris without walking under the Arc de Triomphe, or not seeing the Houses of Parliament in London. Robert Louis Stevenson *is* Edinburgh to many of us; and the house where he spent so much of his childhood brings back a flood of memories.

So I took a cab one afternoon, and when I got to the plain little structure, one of many like it facing a park, the cabman waited for me to get out. When he heard no sound, no click of the door, he turned to see if I had dropped dead. Instead, he saw me gazing, I suppose with a rapt expression, up at the windows. Another eccentric American, no doubt he thought; and he mercifully left me to my dreams. I concluded that he was that rare thing—a cabman

with imagination, and I determined to fee him liberally later on.

There was a tenant in No. 17, and therefore I could not go in; for what would a stranger have thought if I had ventured to ask to be allowed to view the room where R. L. S. had played? I wondered how it felt to be living in the very house where there were so many sweet ghosts, surrounded day after day with so pleasant a fragrance. Yet one cannot forever be conscious of one's golden luck, any more than he can forever rhapsodise over the moon. So I suppose the present tenant of No. 17 occasionally goes below to luncheon, forgetful of the fact that R. L. S. was doubtless led down that same staircase by the adoring Cummie. The ordinary functions of life have to go on, whether you breathe the haunted atmosphere of Heriot Row or the commonplace air of East Thirtieth Street, New York.

So I thought as I gazed up at the windows, and wished that a wistful face, with far-apart eyes, could look down on me. A little boy came toward me, whistling. I stopped him, and asked him if he knew who lived once in Number 17. No, he did not. "Have you ever heard of Robert Louis Stevenson?" I said. Yes, he had heard of him, vaguely. "Don't you know that once, when he was about as old as you, he lived here?" No; that was news to him. And with an indifferent glance at that house which looked just like all the others, he went whistling down the street. "What a funny man!" he probably thought.

R. L. S. couldn't stand the hard Scottish climate, and went away to a sunnier land. I could not blame him, for I found myself pulling my coat more closely about me as I sat there in the cab; and it was only September. He seemed to me a symbol of the power of the men of Britain who were at that moment fighting in France. Many of them, we said, were not strong enough to go through with so dreadful a War; but they left their pens and brushes, their offices and universities, their games and gardens, and went forth to fight for their very existence. They could not be beaten. So R. L. S. fought a good fight; and, wracked with pain, tortured by an illness that weighed his spirits down, he nevertheless refused to give up.

Whether soldier or artist, that is the type of man Great Britain produces. What a host of them she has to her credit now; and how they sprang up from quiet places—from Heriot Rows and Devonshire farms—to help her when the need came!

VI

GLASGOW AND THE CLYDE

WE were more fortunate in our weather at Glasgow, that city of frowning skies. But the sun came out when we arrived; as if to say, "I'll show you what I can do! You have heard how I never show myself here. But look!"

Well, we looked—and it was good. In fact, old Sol, because of his long retirement, was never in better form; and all the people in the Scotch capital were so surprised at his sudden beneficence that they turned out in droves to greet him. I thought at first that they were paying tribute to their American guests—but they scarcely were aware of our presence! After all, Glasgow is a big town, and a busy one. What were a handful of editors to the inhabitants of so industrious a place?

We went up the Clyde that morning, for we wanted to see how Britain was building her ships. As our small craft sailed along the placid river, we heard the thunder of thousands of busy hammers, and all about us were the giant frames that would soon be clothed in steel and iron, ready to fare forth on the seas. They reminded me of the great skeletons of prehistoric animals you see in museums. Un-

couth and undraped they stood there, somewhat out of drawing, row after row of them, the result of days of planning and shaping. Every nail we heard driven into their sides was like an answer to the Hun's "Hymn of Hate." "How can they ever win," I thought, "with these hundreds of ships being so rapidly built?" The line seemed endless. Far as the eye could reach the enormous frameworks stretched, and I marvelled at the cargoes they could and would contain.

Beneath the hulls we saw many young women working in overalls and jumpers, here again coming to the rescue of their country. They waved to us from the shore, dropping their work only long enough to do so, then busily resuming it. For every moment was precious; yet their human desire to signal to us proved that they were all the better workers. Robust girls they were, the best in Scotland, and they laughed and sang as they hammered away. Their voices carried over the sleepy waters; and the morning sunshine had evidently gone to their heads like wine. It was a day for diligence; "one day out of all the years," you could almost say, for it had been raining, raining incessantly in Glasgow, we learned, and this cloudless sky was an event not soon to be forgotten. After all, when you work in the open air, you get to count on the weather, and it's a red-letter morning indeed when the sun was as bright as it was that day.

I cannot say how many ships a month were being

turned out when I was in Glasgow; but the number must have been staggering, and if reports got over to Berlin, there might have been a panic. At this time it must be borne in mind that there were no rumours of peace, or an armistice, and even if there had been I doubt if there would have been a slackening of effort in the shipyards.

So impressive were the noisy hammers that, when I went to our hotel that afternoon, I wrote some verses which I later read at the Lord Mayor's dinner. The Glasgow *Herald* printed them the next morning, and then—a terrible thing happened. All the workers went on strike! Is it possible that the pen *is* mightier than the sword? In all modesty I give below the lines I wrote. I can only leave them to the mercy of my readers, and ask them to judge for themselves whether the shipyard workers did right or wrong!

THE HAMMERS OF THE CLYDE

On lovely Scotland's quiet streams
I sailed in olden days of joy;
I built a fairy house of dreams
When I was but a little boy.
O lost white days of shining peace!
O happy time now sadly gone,
The voice of Memory will not cease
Though dogs of War rush madly on.
I think of hours that used to glide
Like silver on the River Clyde.

And now—a thunder greets my ears
When in the bright September day
I wander with my doubts and fears
Where the Clyde's waters laugh and play:
A thunder that is strangely sweet,
A sound that stirs my troubled mind,
Voices that sing and then repeat
A great new anthem for mankind.
"We are Great Britain's tongues!" with pride
Roar the glad hammers of the Clyde.

"We are her soul made vocal now,
We build a new dream for the old;
Louder and louder, hark! we vow
To speak until War's tale is told.
We shall not fail; we shall not cease
Until proud ships are on the sea,
And comes again the old soft peace
In golden days that are to be.
We speak, and cannot be denied!"
Shout the wild hammers of the Clyde.

And so they pound their glorious song,
And so they sing the long day through,
And Right shall triumph over Wrong,
And the wise dream at last come true.
No sweeter music have I heard
By any rushing, flashing stream;
Hushed is the light song of the bird
For this enduring iron theme.
"Let not the Hun our strength deride!"
Shout the loud hammers of the Clyde.

O brave, blest voice! O sounding note,
Heard thro' the far ends of the world,
Like a brave challenge now you float;
On the four winds your song is whirled.
And who can doubt that you shall save
A weary earth, long, long oppressed?
Sing, sing again, O blest and brave,
Until the world is rocked to rest.
"We shall not fail, nor be denied!"
Answer the hammers of the Clyde.

The factories in and around Glasgow were most impressive. On one side of the Clyde is a modern building, formerly run by a German manufacturer, and, when the War came, taken over by the Government and now used to turn out airplane engines. The planes that contained these engines often penetrated Boche territory, and dropped a bomb or two. Such are the ironies of War.

You could walk through miles and miles of factory aisles, seeing every kind of human endeavour, seeing an airplane grow from its plans and specifications until it emerged whole and entire on the grass at the workroom door. You saw one man twisting a wire as thin as a hair, and down the aisle a girl in a mask spraying the wings of the machine with varnish. From the first nut to the first flight did not seem a lengthy process; but that was only because everything was done systematically and quietly. It is curious to see an airplane loaded on a car for ship-

ment—this thing that, completed, and with a man to guide it, can move so much more swiftly than any locomotive. Odd that it should have to be transported just as eggs or grain are sent abroad. Icarus in a freight-car! There is an element of the ridiculous in the thought. Fancy loading eagles on steamboats!

You look down a lane of workers, both men and women, and you admire their stern yet pleasant faces. How deftly they turn each bolt and screw, and how can they do it with such intense interest, when they have been standing at that same machine for so many long months! It is because they, like the soldiers, have enlisted, and while they have taken no formal oath, most of them feel that a mighty job is theirs, that they play no small share in the solemn business of winning the War. They do not say so; but they feel it. When strikes occur, they are the result of an organised minority, working for selfish ends; and in Great Britain, while I was there, any strikes that occurred lasted an amazingly short time. If my verses above had anything to do with one brief period of laying off work, I must offer my most humble apology to a Government that invited me to be merely a spectator of her industrial effort, and not a fomenter of strikes!

After their long day's work is over, the artisan and the coal-heaver, the stenographer and the machinist, need relaxation. They get it in all the pro-

vincial theatres. I never saw such enthusiastic audiences anywhere as in places like Glasgow, Manchester, and Birmingham. Patriotic songs—the cheaper, cruder kind, hastily written to win popular favour—got little applause, for the people were quick to detect the difference between "God Save the King" and a tin-pan bid for appeal, with some dour damsel draping herself in the flag, lugged in at the chorus. They had over four years of that, and they were blasé. But the comedian who made them, no matter how briefly, forget the War, won instant approval, and they shrieked at his antics. It is a variation of the psychology of dining-out in the smart London hotels. You are not less a patriot because you long for a little anodyne against horror; you are a greater one through the very fact that you know you need relaxation to strengthen you for to-morrow's re-entrance into your part of the battle. Whether that part is literally fighting at the Front or standing beside a grinding machine in a munitions plant makes no difference.

I loved nothing better than to see those big, appreciative audiences roaring their heads off at primitive buffoons; and when an American girl sang coon songs and they would not let her leave the stage, in one city, I rejoiced that she was so definitely doing her bit by bringing happiness to Britain's faithful labourers and soldiers behind the lines.

And so it went in every manufacturing city throughout the Empire. Of course, when I was

there, many young men were still at machines and benches, and these were either returned soldiers or men who had never been drafted because they were thought necessary in shop and mill. It would have been most inefficient to take skilled labour away from every branch of industry. England was quick to see this; and though, nine times out of ten, the young lads kept behind complained bitterly because they were not permitted to go actually to the Front, they realised that a no less important duty was theirs at home; and they stayed behind like the disciplined soldiers they were.

At Birmingham there were crowds of them; and at one shop, where a man in our party made a speech, I have never heard such applause. The boys and girls had gathered in a large empty room after the luncheon hour, and the tangle of machinery was hushed for a half hour in every part of the great buildings. The speaker told them how wonderful was their effort; that they were as valiant, in the eyes of the world, as the men in khaki and blue; that their part was as essential as that of the men who pulled a trigger on the Ypres salient or loaded a Howitzer on the Somme. In fact, the latter, as was perfectly evident, couldn't fight at all if it were not for this job at home, so splendidly done. If I live to be a hundred, I can never forget the cheers of the women—a high, silver sound that thrilled one's blood and made one's heart miss a beat or two. Then came the boom

of the men's shouting, like organ tones after the sound of fifes.

I am glad I have the memory of those enthusiastic voices; for whenever I walked through the clamour and din of a shop, and wanted to talk to a worker, I couldn't hear his or her reply. The machine was always marvellous; but it would have been nothing save for the human being who manipulated it; and I like the human note in everything.

Manchester made me realise this more than ever; for under her dripping, sodden skies I was happy. It was because the people were so charming—a Lord Mayor with a keen sense of humour, and a dinner that, though simple, as all war dinners should be, went off with spirit and gusto. Who could miss sugar and butter in such company? What difference did it make to us that it was raining pitchforks; that it always *did* rain pitchforks in this outspreading manufacturing city of over a million inhabitants? Like Liverpool, Manchester hears the incessant sob of storms and bows her solemn head over her tasks. Her slate roofs and chimney pots—there are aching miles of them—stare up at the grey heavens, and never seem to expect a glimpse of the sun.

But on the night I got to Manchester I learned that Lloyd George was there. He had been speaking in the vicinity, and had been taken ill. We couldn't see him; yet the knowledge that he was in the same city with us gave me a thrill—"the thrill that comes once in a lifetime," as one of our Ameri-

can cartoonists says. I am not much of a hero worshipper, but the proximity of that great man, that great Statesman, whose flaming speeches I had read so many times; that little Welshman who had risen to be Great Britain's premier, plunging ahead where others might have hesitated—I was glad to be breathing the same atmosphere with him—even though that atmosphere wasn't all that it might have been! Like a refrain in a Rossetti ballad, "Lloyd George is here! Lloyd George is here!" kept singing in my foolish head. But of course he never knew. Why should he? We met him afterwards, in London, when he was grown well again; and it seemed strange that this man, so short of stature, could be carrying on his shoulders the burdens of Britain's vast problems. An armistice had been asked for by the Hun, and the little man at 10 Downing street, while confident that the War would be won, and won right, did not commit himself as to what would then immediately transpire. There was a twinkle in his eye, and his leonine head, with the well-known white hair just a little too long at the back, jerked itself higher when he spoke of his country's determination to carry the War through to the right conclusion.

Since then the Kaiser has abdicated, and a new government will be established in Germany. How swiftly the world is moving, and how glorious it is to be living while such history is being made and written!

VII

OLD WINCHESTER, AND OUR CAMP

IN days of peace we all used to "do" the cathedral towns of Europe. No one who cared for Gothic architecture was ever known to omit Winchester —that historic little town in the south of England where kings were crowned in the far days of pomp and splendour and imperial purple. And Stonehenge is close by, with its ruins of Druid temples, almost up to the very worn and crumbling arches of which now creep—American camps! Such are the anachronisms one observes on a thrilling pilgrimage such as mine.

In the stately cathedral, with its columns that literally seem to reach to God, its quaint inscriptions on many an ancient grave, its perfect stained-glass windows, one looks around with reverent eyes; but there is no lovelier sight in this hushed, old-world place of peace than the two flags that hang as one before the high altar. The Union Jack and the Stars and Stripes are draped majestically in the air, and they are arranged, either by a happy accident or by design —it really does not matter which—to fall so that they touch each other. I confess that when I saw

them thus, my religious ecstasy fell away from me to give place to a patriotic emotion such as I have only infrequently experienced. "At last," I whispered, "we are together. Pray God we may remain so! For we are one blood, one people, after all." And just then the organ played softly, as if to say "Amen" to my unexpected prayer.

Not far from the silence and sanctity of the cathedral was a big bustling American camp, where it was my good fortune to lunch. A little while before it had been nothing; now it was a town of several thousand busy inhabitants, with buildings that any architect might have been proud to design; with a hospital and every other necessity; all as clean as a ball-room floor, and as ready for a lively dance that used to be called the German.

I always stand appalled and speechless and humble before machinery and army camps. They are two of the modern miracles that I cannot understand; and the efficiency that erects shacks and puts up tents in a night, where previously nothing had been, terrifies me. The magic carpet of Bagdad is not more mysterious; and this new world at Winchester standing suddenly next to the old town itself, seemed to me a symbol of the greater bonds that are to be. What would the old dead kings have thought if they could have seen the astonishing achievement? What would Jane Austen, who once lived placidly in Winchester, and who wrote so beautifully of quiet towns, have thought of this newly awakened hive

close by? There wasn't a village so remote in war days but that it did not suffer the possibility of suddenly finding itself a teeming centre of affairs. An airdrome might make up its modern mind to settle down in your back yard; or some natty young American officers might drive up the scented lane only a mile away and pitch a thousand tents in the twinkling of an eye. Drains and pipes might be plunged into the astonished ground, and an old apple-tree, that thought to live out its days in peace, find pegs hammered into it while whistling workmen sawed lumber for military huts. A cow might be serenely chewing its cud in a fine meadow this morning; to-morrow it finds itself transferred to a spot on the other side of town. For the foundations are being laid for a colossal training school, and pastoral content must make way for the feet of the young men. Where dandelions smiled last Sunday for Strephon and Chloe, who knows how many Lewis guns might be roaring on Wednesday?

All over England it was so, as all over America, too. Only in England, because every foot of earth has been cultivated for years, the military camps were far more comfortable; and against a background of gentler living they came to reflect that background. You did not see the wide, deserted wastes around them that you saw, for instance, near a place like Yaphank or Wrightstown. There was grass at the door of the most hastily constructed hut; and ten to one there was a green hillslope to be seen from

every man's rude window; and some one had planted phlox or hollyhocks at every other corner of the camp. One thing the English do more frequently than we: they make a garden, even if it's only a foot long and six inches wide, and when our boys went there to train, they imbibed this love of flowers and shrubs, and expressed themselves in terms of growing things. You can't stay in England a week, and settle down, without wanting what every one else has—tea, and a tiny garden. They are part of the national life, as essential as air and rain. And if men could beautify their training quarters, is it not possible that they went to war with a heart more right? God knows there was plenty of mud and mire and filth before them. Let them snatch all the scraps of English beauty that they could before they threw themselves into the wrack of battle and the awful arms of Mars.

VIII

HOW WE DIDN'T FLY—AND HOW WE DID

ONE night at a dinner in London I sat next to a Major in the Royal Flying Corps, and I told him of my desire to go up in an airplane. We were about to be sent to France; and to my joy he said he thought it could be arranged that those of our party who wished to do so could cross in a Handley-Paige machine. "But," he added, "you must know that there is an element of danger in it; for the Boche know that we have been taking over a few passengers, and—well, you never can tell what might happen. There is a war going on," he laughed.

The spice of risk of course only made me all the more anxious to make the trip. Could anything be more romantic, I thought, than flying from England to France in war-time? Surely an adventure to remember all one's days; something to think of and talk of for years to come. To think that I was living in such an age!

Moreover, I have always dreaded the usual Channel crossing—as who has not? Never a good sailor, I abominate that short voyage on the heaving,

choppy waters; and it seemed like getting the better of the Channel, winking at her, as it were, and then calmly and gloriously rising above her in the air and reaching the opposite shore without a trace of a splashing or a hint of *mal de mer*.

So one morning I found myself rising with the cock and taking a train to Sandgate, a few miles from Folkstone. It was a wonderful morning—exactly made for air pilots and their enthusiastic passengers. Wine weather, you would have called it, with a sparkle in the atmosphere, no wind, and a sun that warmed your heart and blood.

The little village reached out its arms to take us in; and in less time than it takes to tell it we were wrapped in greatcoats, had put on goggles, life-preservers and thick gloves, and had distributed ourselves neatly in the enormous machine that was fastened to the earth waiting, as a fire horse waits and strains at its harness, for the signal to go.

I had a feeling that I was about to embark on the greatest enterprise of my life, and a thrill ran up my spine at the thought of my good fortune. As I sat in the machine, I looked about me, determined that no least detail should escape me. I wanted to photograph on my brain, down to the minutest particle, everything around me. And so compact were my quarters that I felt like a prisoner in his tiny cell; and I said to myself that in the few moments before the trip began I would be acquainted with my surroundings as a man in jail is acquainted with every

speck of masonry on his four walls. I wouldn't miss a detail. And so I can remember now the very curve of the canvas, the number of specks upon the side nearest me, the distance from the top of my head to what was the roof, the number of little wooden supports there were in my compartment, and such-like useless facts. A half hour must have gone by, but time was the only thing that took flight. I wondered what was the matter. I heard mechanics and pilots walking on the smooth turf below me, and I could catch, now and then, a fragment of their talk. I gathered that there was an oil leak somewhere, but that it could be fixed in no time. I was patient and impatient by turns. Then a delightful Scotch Major poked his head through the floor and said it would take a full hour more to repair the slight damage, and hadn't we better get out and come and have some luncheon at the castle?

It was high noon by now, and I thought of the meal that probably awaited us in France; and forebodings came to me. Looking like a Polar explorer, and quite as undignified (for I could see the others, replicas of myself), I climbed down and toddled away, not to the Lord High Executioner, but to a heavenly luncheon in one of the most beautiful old castles in all England.

Built in the eleventh century, its magic casements did indeed open on "perilous seas forlorn"; and below the great room in which we sat, with a valley stretching far as the eye could reach, lay a garden

where hollyhocks whispered to one another and the patches of grass had lately been properly barbered. Well, it was almost as wonderful to be lunching here, unexpectedly, as to be sitting round a table in France; but as the meal went on I heard the ominous sound of the rising wind, and my heart sank. Then the long-distance telephone rang, and we were told that, since the weather had suddenly changed, we were not to be allowed to fly.

Ignominiously, then, we had to take motors to Folkstone, and meet the rest of our party who, not so adventurous as we, were taking the boat trip.

But later on it was my good fortune to fly from Hendon, just outside London, in a De Haviland-Four. Beyond the clouds I went, on a bracing morning; and there is but one word to express all one's concentrated emotions: ecstasy. I had a taste of the Immelmann turn, that gyrating movement which makes you feel like the water in a glass which a magician twirls in the air, the centrifugal force keeping it safely in. If I loved the little square patches of English landscape, seeing them from the earth, I doubly loved them when I saw them from my perilous height. Lakes and rivers look like little mirrors, and the whole world is a toy garden such as your mother bought for you when you were a child. And the feeling of aloneness is beyond the power of words to express. You are one with the elements, and no wonder that those fine young poets of the air who scale, day after day to such unprecedented dis-

tances, have a look of wonder in their eyes, as if they had had visions which you and I have never had. The stars come to be their companions, and almost miraculously lean down to greet them at night; and the billowy clouds are their incessant comrades. Men, and the petty affairs of our quarrelsome world, grow trivial as one mounts to heaven. Even the War seems a little thing. There are no boundaries here, only space illimitable; and one has the sense of being the rain, or the sunlight, or the voice in the wind. Mysterious detachment is yours, and in the hurrying flight, you wonder if you will be able to readjust yourself to mere existence on the solid earth.

You never think of falling; and because there is no sheer declivity beneath you, as there is when you lean from a high parapet, you do not grow dizzy. You only drink in the wine-charged air, and abandon yourself to the glory around you; and when you pierce the first white cloud and ascend seemingly to God, your one hope is that this is not a dream. And when you slide back to earth, gradually and with the mathematical precision of a train entering a depot, you feel as if you had had a spiritual bath, and that your heart and soul have been purged of all contamination.

Ecstasy! That is what you have known.

TO FRANCE: 1918

How shall one come to France, save on one's knees?
O stricken land, we cannot pity you,
For steadfast burned your lamp the long night through,
As your sad face peered through the poplar trees.
You never wept!—one of Life's mysteries;
Yet how your heart did suffer! O most true,
Most faithful, and most beautiful, who knew
Such pain, and livest still—you hold heaven's keys.

We love you, we adore you; yet no word
Of pity shall cross the lips of us who come
To look upon your face now you are dumb
With sorrow for your cities long interred.
O pity us instead! Your high distress
Lifts you to God, and Jeanne d'Arc's saintliness.

IX

IN FRANCE

GETTING over to France in war-time in an airplane and getting over prosaically by way of the Channel are two very different things. Yet, arriving at night, as we did, and in a light rain, gave the adventure an added glamour.

We knew we were going a number of miles from the coast to a certain château; but we had no idea of the exact direction we would take. There was something doubly sacred now about the very soil of France—a country that had been riddled so long by the shot and shell of the combat; and one's first glimpse of the women, in sombre black, sent a chill to our hearts. How they had suffered, and how interminably long the agony seemed to last! Under ghastly station lamps the sad eyes of these women looked even sadder, and I wondered how they could bear so much sorrow and still not weep.

Our motors plunged through the darkness along a road smooth with the day's rain, and lined with the inevitable poplars. A chill wind blew in our faces, and we buttoned our coats a little tighter about us. There were no lights in the villages we passed

through, and if London had seemed dark, here indeed was the blackness of a nether world. And it was so still!

We had gone several miles when, far, far off, I distinctly heard the sound of a gun, and then another; and in some remote region of the sky I saw a vague flash. Then I knew that I was in the War, within sound of the monster cannon that shot to kill, and my spirit ached, as did my body, and I wondered again what Life meant. At that very moment some one—perhaps hundreds—were rushing toward Death; and while the distant sound I had heard was only a sound to me, it was perhaps the voice of doom to some stricken soldier in No-Man's Land. I, in a comfortable motor, slipped quietly to a house of light, whilst he, in the rain-swept darkness, slipped to a house of death. It was too terrible to seem real. I could only hope that I was but dreaming; that I would waken and find the world War a nightmare.

Warm candlelight awaited us, likewise the warm welcome of our British hosts. There was a roaring fire, and the sense of proximity to danger that lends such a flavour to any adventure.

The next morning I saw a serene swan floating on the moat at our very elbow, dipping its head now and then in the cool waters, preening its feathers, and as unconscious of the troubles of this world as a rose in a shadowy garden. This swan, happily, knew nothing of the terrors of gas-masks and the tests one must go through before one can go forth to view the fiery

scene of action. Thrice fortunate bird! For promptly after breakfast we were put through a drill, and forced to go into a tiny room filled with sulphur, so that we would be sure that our masks would not fail us in an emergency. The prospect of *alerte* signs does not make you feel very comfortable; and again you think how extraordinarily successful the Boches have been in making this world a miserable place to live in. Wherever you turn you are confronted with discomforts; and even now that the War is done, the seas are starred with mines that may explode in years to come, when one's children are sailing on a summer holiday.

As in the case of Great Britain, the French colonials had come to the rescue of the mother land; and on the road that first morning we saw many of them working with a will, turbaned in most picturesque fashion, swarthy of complexion, solemn-faced and alert-eyed. How the world had been bound together by the conflict!

Here, too, as in England, we met few people. Motoring for pleasure was not, of course, indulged in, and only occassionally would a little farmer's cart, with probably a donkey drawing it, go by; or, rather, we would go by it with our flying car. This particular section of the country had been untouched by the War, and so the fields were as green as ever, and the ancient tumbling hills, like petrified waves, lifted their beauty all around us. No wonder men call it La Belle France!

We had taken our lunch along with us, for there would be no inns, as we sadly knew, on the road we would reach about noon. For the devastated town of Albert was our destination—that place which had been torn by the ruthless Huns until no wall was left standing, no window-pane intact, no street with a name that could be read. For months, as all the world knows, the statue of the Virgin in front of the Cathedral hung suspended in mid-air, until she was tenderly taken down by the authorities, lest she should crumble on the ground.

When I first stood among these ruins, I tell it without shame that I wept. How could this beautiful city be restored? Could I really be living and seeing this forlorn mass of wall and plaster? All the photographs I had seen, all the tales I had heard from the lips of friends back from this country, had never given me a picture of the utter sorrow of it all. Not that I had to see to believe; for from the very moment the Boches had entered Belgium I was convinced they were capable of anything; yet this was unbelievably awful, seen in the glowing light of high noon. O the pity of it! I walked through what had once been quiet little curving streets, and here was a broken archway that must have led into the curé's garden. One poppy, through some miracle, lifted its satin hood from between two crumbling stones; and I thought of long-gone peaceful twilights when there were other poppies in this place, and the priest had smoked his pipe behind the wall, never dreaming of

a time when he would be thrust from his serenity. What had he ever done—what had his village ever done, to deserve this punishment? I sought for an answer; but only the September wind blew over Albert and its waste of white stones.

In front of the Cathedral I nibbled dejectedly at my mid-day sandwich, when around the turn came a young Canadian despatch-bearer, on foot, who hailed me in friendly fashion. He was out for a stroll, he said, and was glad to encounter any one—particularly some one who didn't wear a uniform. He had grown so sick, after four years, of the sight of khaki, he told me. His quarters were a few miles away, and he was glad to get off his wheel and walk a bit. I found he was from Montreal; and he told me that he had been married two hours before he sailed for France, and he had never been home on leave. He showed me his bride's picture—a charming young nurse, as pretty as she ought to have been for such a romantic story. He also had a bundle of clippings from home newspapers, giving sparkling accounts of his marriage.

"I know she's true to me, and certainly I've been true to her," he said, with the utmost simplicity. "In the army, it's all up to the individual man. You can be as bad as you want to be,—or as good, if you want to put it that way," he added.

I knew by his eyes that he was telling the truth. Yet they say that the army does awful things to our youth. Maybe it does—sometimes.

In all these ruined towns you could see the dugouts that the Boches had built, sometimes thirty and forty feet underground, the entrance on one street, and a secret exit on another, so that in case of a surprise attack, they could avoid being buried alive, and make their escape through a side door, as it were. There were staircases and row after row of bunks for the soldiers; and, as one Tommy told me (he was living in an abandoned dugout), "We never could teach the Germans anything about this sort of thing." Yes, they did it to perfection; and one of the mistakes of the War was in belittling forever the genius for certain enterprises which our enemy possessed.

In every devastated town we visited, the one imperishable thing we saw were the Dubonnet and Chocolat Menier signs. Shells might shatter the walls of a Cathedral or a town hall, or the palace of the local aristocrat, but never by any chance did they seem to touch these advertisements. It would have gladdened the heart of an American manufacturer, for instance, to see the legend of his wares so miraculously saved. Some special providence must be working to keep the world from prohibition; else why, forever within my view, was this reminder of an *aperitif* that most of us like exceedingly?

And then the *Verboten* signs! Everywhere the Boches had placed them the moment they occupied a village. You must not do this or that. It is *verboten* to sit on this wall, or to go down this road;

and the French, with their charming sense of humour, have left them nailed up, just as they found them whenever they recaptured a place. The German type did not seem to annoy them in the least. Perhaps, for years to come, they will allow these signs to remain. They might surround them with board fences and charge admission from Cook's tourists who wish to see some relics of the War. A Yankee way of retrieving lost fortunes, but perhaps not so poor a scheme, after all.

And speaking of signs, I saw a tragic one on a certain afternoon. We had come, in our motors, to what looked to me like a lonely battlefield, filled with shell holes, an empty plain, with no sign of a habitation of any kind. There were a few helmets strewn on the ground, a few hand grenades that it might have been death to touch—nothing more. Suddenly, at a sharp turn of what once had been a good road, I saw this sign, written by an ironic soldier:

"THIS *WAS* VILLERS CARBONNEL."

That was on the road to Peronne, and I hope the French leave it there forever, as an eloquent memorial, an unforgettable reminder of what the Boches have done.

I saw trees near this same spot, the leaves all gone from them, mere crooked sticks against the grey sky. There were rows of them, looking like nothing so much as scrawny hags with extended arms and dis-

torted outlines. I asked the officer who was accompanying us why the French did not cut them down.

"They tried to do so," he answered, "but when they put their saws into the trunks, they immediately struck so much shrapnel and steel that the teeth of the saws broke; and no axe could penetrate what was left of the bark. The job was so hopeless that they had to give it up."

Some day, of course, when the people have time, they will burn these dead trees, or blow them up with dynamite; but for the time being they also will have to remain, another reminder of the foul destruction of the Hun.

Bapaume is another city that has been almost utterly wiped out. The cemetery is particularly a terrible place to visit. Here I saw a deep grave that had been opened by the Boche and used as a store place for shells; and crucifixes had been demolished and headstones overturned, as if in a wild riot; yet here were the graves of many a young German officer whom the French had carefully buried in the past.

French taste can never be questioned. I remember seeing three fresh graves side by side: the first contained all that was left of a French soldier, the second, a German, and the third, another Frenchman. On the two French graves there were heaped many flowers; yet on the centre mound a single rose had been placed. That rose will always remain in my

mind as an exquisite gesture. I wonder if in all Germany a similar case could be found?

On one of the half-destroyed streets of Bapaume there was a little card on a door of what once had been the home of a dressmaker:

> "In Madame L——'s absence, she may be found in the next street."

Alas! there was no next street; and I thought of how many times the good Madame L—— must have walked around that corner. Where was she now? Indeed, I thought often of the vanished populace of these once happy towns. What a moment it must have been for them when they were told they must evacuate, taking with them what they could! In an upper window of one house I saw a stuffed peacock, probably some one's priceless possession, but left behind in the rush, and now strangely intact. Shells had flown all around it. They had destroyed mirrors and book-cases filled with rare old volumes, candlesticks and carved wood tables; but they had not even rumpled the feathers of the proud and useless peacock, which lifted its head to the place where the roof had once been and stared with unseeing eyes at the blue sky. Behind the peacock was a lovely garden which also had remained unharmed. Here, as in the curé's garden in Albert, poppies bloomed, and there was also a riot of roses and long, tangled grass. A deserted garden is as sad a sight as any

I know; for always memories are awakened, and you wonder what sweet spirit first conceived and then enjoyed its loveliness. The perfume of old days is here, and now and then a bird comes, as if looking for an old friend to feed it, and your heart almost breaks for the tiny creature that does not understand. But does he understand less than you?

X

HUN PRISONERS

I REMEMBER, some years before this War, playing a game of hearts with a German. He was not quite familiar with the game, and I explained to him that one of the rules we always made was never to lead a low heart until the third hand round.

"Why not?" he said—almost shouted.

"Because it gives the player such an unfair advantage," I explained.

"Oh, rubbish!" he replied. "You have to play the low hearts sometime; why not take the advantage right away?"

And I couldn't seem to make him understand. Looking back now, his refusal to see and obey this simple rule of ordinary politeness sums up the attitude of the Hun. Rules? They acknowledge none —save those of their own making. It is "rubbish" to be decent to your adversary. Indeed, I have come to the conclusion, after seeing German prisoners in French and English camps and hospitals, that they rather look down upon an enemy who treats them well. If we could only have brought ourselves to

grind the Hun under our heel when we took him captive, he might have had some respect for us. As it is, I am afraid I think he has only contempt.

When the War was going very badly for Fritz in October, 1918, I got permission to speak to a prisoner in one of the ruined towns on the British front. He still thought the Fatherland would win, and he had the audacity to shrug his shoulders in scorn when I told him that was impossible.

"Do you really want to see a German victory—after this?" I asked, indicating the devastation about us.

"I certainly do," he replied. "Germany deserves to win."

"But she cannot. Don't you know that America will have three million men in the field by next year?"

His face turned a trifle paler. For the first time his arrogance disappeared. He had to admit that he knew nothing of the strength of the United States; and when her power was made known to him, depression took the place of smug satisfaction. You see, the Hun has to be made to realise that force—"force to the utmost," as the President has said—will conquer him. No amount of argument or soft speech will turn away his stupid wrath. He must be vanquished by the sword, and by the sword alone. Like the bully he is, a whip hand is the only hand he respects.

I saw many German prisoners in France and England. I never saw one who was really working. A

placid guard stood near them, always, and as we walked or drove by, every one, including the guard, followed us with his eyes. The labour—such as it was—was abandoned for the next ten minutes, or until we got out of sight. I was told that sentries often smoked cigarettes with their captives, and chatted with them. I saw one strapping German youth sound asleep on the top of a hay-wagon in France one balmy afternoon, as comfortable as though he were in a feather-bed, while his guard sat beneath on the hard ground, reading a newspaper. No wonder so many Huns are happy enough to be captured! We treat them as though they were innocent children, not the beasts who cry *"Kamerad!"* and then seek to murder their unsuspecting enemy. And all this good treatment went on, while in the London *Times* appeared a series of articles telling of the vile manner in which the British soldiers in Germany were handled. Their packages from home were stolen, and they were jeered at when they asked for food. They were pricked with bayonets for the slightest failure to obey an order which they may not have understood. I was never for following any such wretched Hun example; but I do hold that it was a sign of weakness on our part to go on treating German prisoners of war as though they were house guests, when we knew how abominably the Prussian had behaved toward our helpless men. If Germany becomes a real democracy and sincerely repents of

her many sins, there may be some forgiveness awaiting her.

It is weakness, not strength, to forgive and forget a great wrong too easily. I was glad to see the British acquiring some good old-fashioned hatred, and they acquired more of it before the conflict ended. It is as legitimate to hate evil as it is to love good; and for the life of me I never could understand the casuist who would go over the top with Pollyanna sweetness in his heart, feeling "glad" that things were no worse than they were. That isn't manhood. It is the stupidity of a jackass and a mollycoddle.

All the Boche prisoners I saw—even those captured a day or two before I got a glimpse of them —were stalwart, husky fellows. Make no mistake about that. They evidently were not ill fed behind their own lines. They surrendered to the Allies in the pink of condition. Therefore, all the stories I had heard about old men and very young boys fighting for Germany as late as September, 1918, were absolutely false. The Hun was still putting a fine lot of men into the trenches, and they were evil propagandists who tried to make us believe otherwise. Evidently there was some effort being made to give us the impression that Germany was on her last legs at that time, whereas her men were as strong a looking lot as ever. It was a miracle that she could continue so steadily to throw so much good material

into the War—clean-looking, phlegmatic creatures, anywhere from nineteen to thirty years old.

I remember asking an English Colonel how he would feel about Germans after the War. He did not hesitate a moment.

"Oh, I know very well. If, some time in the future, a Boche should be driving by my door in a motor, and the machine should break down, I'd take him some food, and a cup of cold water; but I'd never ask him to come under my roof. I couldn't, you know. They've never fought clean."

That, if I know anything at all, is the point of view of a gentleman; of a human being. A race who cannot play fair cannot expect a fair deal. Do you ask a card sharp into your club? I hold that the Hun has cheated at the game which he, like all dishonest players, proposed. He got us in, and then he pulled his tricks. So perhaps he will find that there isn't any club now of which he can become a member.

You hear a lot about reprisals. Dr. Albert Shaw, of our party, thought every German prisoner should be forced to remain in France and Belgium, and rebuild with his own hands the towns he had helped to despoil. If you broke a window in your boyhood you were probably told, as I was, to find a glazier to repair the damage, and pay him out of your own pocket money. That is poetic justice. One of the first terms of our peace conditions should embody Dr. Shaw's sensible idea. It would be a fearful pun-

ishment for the Hun to stare, day after day, on the ruins of French cities, and to carry away, on his own back, the broken stones and pillars his armies had demolished.

Stephen Phillips wrote a fine poem when Rheims Cathedral was destroyed, in which he said that it should never be rebuilt; forever, rather, let it remain as a broken monument to the wickedness that laid its splendour low. Could any greater punishment be devised? Posterity would look, with blanched face, upon this almost unbelievable destruction. The ages would pass, and the word "Hun" would be a synonym for all that is beastliest.

XI

THE SPIRIT OF THE FRENCH

JUST as the British could not be downed, the French also remained calm under their terrible afflictions. Town after town was wiped out by the devastating Boche, but the world heard no cry from France. She nerved herself for the ordeal that Fate had said must be hers; yet the moment it was suggested that the Allies might get into Germany and destroy a few of the villages there, the Hun threw up his hands and cried for peace. That has always been, and always will be, the attitude of the bully, the coward and the cur. Might is right when he inflicts his might upon the other fellow; it is all wrong when the other fellow turns. With dripping hands the Germans have shouted *"Kamerad!"* to the world.

One of the saddest sights I saw in France were the graves of the unknown English dead, in some localities as thick as the peonies along a garden walk. The little white crosses bore some such inscription as this:

FOR AN UNKNOWN SOLDIER
Who Gave His Life for England
R. I. P.

No name—no date. One took off his hat in the wind and rain for such brave lads, and prayed that they had not died in vain. And oh, there were so many of them! Who can ever say now that England had become a decadent nation? Think of all the sturdy boys who leaped to her assistance, now lying in Flanders, proud to have given their lives in so great a cause.

THE UNKNOWN DEAD

They loved the English hedgerows,
And scented English lanes;
They loved the sunlight on their downs,
And the soft English rains.
And now—they sleep in Flanders
Or where the sad Marne flows,
A bleak white cross above their heads;
Their names—ah! no one knows.

They loved the life of London,
With lights that gleamed like pearls,
And theatres and taverns,
And rosy English girls.
Their youth was a brief glory
That sped too swiftly by;
They left their schools and cricket,
And came out here—to die.

And some were shining poets,
And some were simple boys
Who loved the Surrey fields, and all
Substantial English joys.

From Eton and from Oxford,
From many an English town
They came to save a world from shame
And lay their young lives down.

In some celestial garden
Perhaps they sit to-day
And laugh as they once loved to laugh,
Play as they used to play.
'Tis we who weep for young lads gone;
But they—they are not dead,
Though simple crosses stand above
Each brave young English head.

They loved, and are contented
On windy wastes to sleep.
Yet when the English daisies
Begin to smile and creep,
Pluck them and take them over
To many a lonely grave;
For they loved English flowers,
These young, and bright, and brave.

If every lad in London wanted to go to the War, so it seemed to me, one day, that every old London 'bus had been mobilised for service at the Front; for they came along our road in droves, hardly recognisable at first, for they were painted a solemn black, and of course the innumerable advertisements had been taken down! They were used for carrying soldiers to the first lines, and some of them had been turned into hospital carriages. I found a boy in one

of these, smoking the inevitable cigarette, his leg shot away. He grinned, though his pain must have been excruciating. "I'm from London," he choked out, "and I've ridden many a time—in—one of these 'busses. I used to—take—my girl—to the theatre in 'em. Lord! I never thought—I'd be ridin' in —one—like this!" Then he fainted.

Eleanor Franklin Egan has told of the little Thames boats that went to do service in Mesopotamia, finding their own perilous way through many troubled waters. Even though the old London 'busses had to be carried over the Channel by a mere boat, they enlisted with no less fine a spirit; and if they missed the thrills of Piccadilly Circus for a time, they soon entered a far more exciting arena; and many of them saved the lives of those same London boys that rode on top of them as children ride on elephants.

Beyond Pozières, where the brave Australians fell, and where three wind-blown crosses mark their graves on the Butte de Warlencourt, there was another ruined village, even the name of which I do not know. I remember the bitter irony, however, of two little signs which leaped up out of the mud. They read "To Paradise Road," and "To Love street."

All around these signs were miles of barbed wire —that barbed wire which gets so frightfully on your nerves. The time comes when you dream of barbed wire, and it runs through your tossing nights as it ran through the cruel War, in an endless tangle. I recall

once seeing a picture of a soldier who had been caught in it; and the horror of his fate remains with me. If we keep the U-boat out of all future wars, and poisoned gas and dum-dum bullets, let us also see that barbed wire is not permitted. Even when prisoners are confined behind it, a Frenchman who had been a captive in Germany told me, it gets on their nerves to such an extent that they almost go mad. An ordinary fence, he said, held no such terrors for him; but he was afflicted with a disease which, for want of a better term, he called "captivitis" whenever he was surrounded by barbed wire. I don't wonder. It may be just the thing for animals; but it isn't good for the soul of man.

But the soldier got used to many things, and barbed wire was only one of many unpleasantnesses, he would have told you. I used to marvel at the patience of all the boys I saw, and at the patience of the women who, on lonely crossroads, had come to serve them with coffee and cigarettes just behind the lines. And crossroads are not nice places to be in the war zone. The Germans had a friendly way of shelling them every afternoon, since they knew that lorries, laden with supplies, drove along them frequently; and the precision with which the shells could be made to fall almost took your breath away. Yet I found two American women in a poor little tent just beyond the intersection of such a road, utterly unmindful of their danger. They lived in dug-outs, just as the men did; yet they looked as spick and span

as if they were going to tea at the Ritz. Coloured boys, as well as white boys, were their guests on the particular day I saw them, and impartially they doled out their dainties and chatted with their soldier friends.

These women did not mind a shell or two during the course of the afternoon. They were too busy to pay any attention to them. And a little further along, where we were taken to see how our Howitzers worked—I say "our," although, as a matter of fact, they were the English guns—we found that the boys who worked the machines were equally unmindful of return shells. They, too, lived in dug-outs, and as I emerged on this particular afternoon, probably looking very comical in my trench helmet and with my gas-mask clutched to my breast, an English sergeant greeted me with, "Just in time for tea, sir!" With one hand he was pouring out a cup of the refreshing beverage, while with the other he was pointing to a shell which he wanted his men to send over to Fritz. His cakes and biscuits were laid out in a neat row on a long board which was supported by two old kegs; and his tin tea-pot was as shiny as the best housewife would have liked to see it. Any moment he might be in Eternity; but he simply must have his tea. And, being English, he wanted to share it with some one; for teatime is hardly a sacramental time if you spend it entirely alone.

There we were in an arch of shells, and because I was an ignorant civilian, the sergeant offered to

show me how his gun was fired. I stood as close as I dared, and just as the firing was about to take place, I suddenly remembered reading somewhere, years ago, that it is safest to stand on one's toes and open one's mouth at such a moment.

"Have you any cotton for your ears?" a private shouted to me. He might as well have asked me if I had a goldfish concealed about my person. Of course I hadn't any cotton for my ears; and I wanted to know why, if cotton for my ears was so necessary, some one hadn't told me before the shell had been placed in the Howitzer! But some one had cotton for my ears, and I had just time to stuff it in, when—"Bang!" went the gun, and it seemed as if the earth around me rocked with the concussion. Here these boys had been, for ten months on a stretch, most of them never having had a day off in all that time. Yet they were as cheerful as you please, though of course they never caught a glimpse of the enemy. It must have gotten very tiresome shooting their arrow into the air that way all day long, and never knowing where it landed.

We stood around, talking of this, all of us forgetful of the fact that Fritz, knowing the British were at tea, would be sure to send his visiting card immediately. He did. It landed within a few hundred feet of where we were standing. It came with a sizzing sound that is not pleasant; but our names were not written on it, as the Tommy says; yet I confess that I moved away from that particular gun as swiftly as

I could, and the perspiration began to fall down my face from under my uncomfortably heavy helmet. Any one who says he doesn't mind being in a region where Howitzer shells fall is not telling the truth.

As I turned to walk rapidly down the poplar-lined road, another shell greeted me, this time a bit closer; and, as we had left our motors some distance beyond and come the rest of the way in a lorrie, we had to travel fast on foot and keep a sharp look-out. To add to my happiness, Major M——, who hurried along at my side, told me that this was the exact hour for shelling this particular road, and that possibly the airplane above us was a German plane, signalling the Boche our location. "If you hear a shell coming (of course you'll never see it!) drop to the ground, and lie perfectly still."

But I never heard another shell; and I began to wonder if I had been hit and was now walking on some road in paradise; for if you're struck you'll never know it. Which remark has never cured me of my fear of lightning. I have a horror of being hit, and not killed outright, and seeing myself a paralysed or maimed individual for the rest of my days.

As a matter of fact the plane above us was *not* a Boche machine, but one of our own. The pilot sailed serenely above us, oblivious of the fact that the Germans opened fire on him. All the shells missed him by hundreds of yards, and it is seldom that an aviator is downed in this way. It's the fight in the air

with an individual enemy that usually brings him to earth.

In the half-ruined village near this sector, as we rode back in the twilight, we could still hear the roar of the guns; but it was good to know that we were out of danger. I dreaded most, not a bomb that would kill us outright, but a gas bomb that might torture us hours later.

In the streets of this village, where we stopped for a cup of tea, a few children were playing, too young to realise that only a little way off the noise of battle was going on, and a war was being waged that, when won, would save them, and perhaps their children's children, from the necessity of fighting for their principles in years to be.

XII

AN ANGLO-AMERICAN ALLIANCE

LIKE the gunners beneath their camouflaged machines, a General who directs the movements of his troops never sees the enemy, and seldom his own men. He lives the life of an ascetic, the loneliest existence possible. No vacations for him! It is all work, day and night.

We met such a General on the British front. He was in an old château, and his room was almost as bare as a monk's cell. A tiny bed stood in the corner, and in a neat row his servant had placed his various pairs of boots. There was a table in the centre of the room, on which was a pitcher of water. The walls were unadorned, save for a huge map of the whole of France, decorated with pins of various colours. These he moved, from time to time, far more slowly than an expert chess-player would move a rook. A telephone stood within easy reach of the bed, and there were two chairs—only two. For four long years this General had lived in this room, or one just like it. There seemed precious little glory in such an existence. His every waking thought was of the War, and the winning of it. In

his younger days he had been through many campaigns, or he would not have been here now, with his experience and brains to direct the great sector of which he was in command. But his eyes never saw what I might see when, one stormy sunset, we were taken near Cambrai, just before the city fell.

We happened to be driving along a lonely road, and nothing was in sight save the wreck of a German railway car at the foot of a ravine on the left of us. To our right there was a bit of swamp land, and before us a towering hill with a narrow road down one side of it.

Suddenly, against the angry western sky, from behind this high hill came a troop of cavalry—lancers, two abreast—four thousand of them. They were the relief, and they were going into battle as fresh and young as I ever saw any men, on the finest steeds and in utter silence. They looked like something out of the fifteenth century, and I ached for the lost opportunity of an artist. For here was a picture that one would see only once in a lifetime, and it should have been put imperishably on canvas.

They were all English boys, and as they came close to us, we took off our hats. One young lieutenant carried a little white dog in his left arm, next to his heart, in his right hand his lance and his reins. As he got beside me, I said to him, "I see you're taking your mascot into the fray!"

"You bet!" he cried, smiling. "I wouldn't leave

him behind—would I, Haig?" leaning down and kissing that fuzzy ball.

The British were nine days getting Cambrai, after some of the grimmest fighting in history. Practically every one of those men we saw went down in the terrible effort; and I keep wondering if the young Lieutenant and his dog were saved. I shall never know.

But they took Cambrai.

So many faces keep coming back to me. There was Pierre, who drove our car for us on the French front—a private who had been wounded early in the War and now drove for his Captain when he went out with people like us. Because France had been ravaged by the Hun, even the car we used was an old and dilapidated affair, taking hills with an effort, but with the French spirit in its sturdy little engine. It stalled only once, and then, as luck would have it, when a shell dropped near us, on a ridge in full view of the Boche. Both Pierre and the machine were thoroughly ashamed, but not a bit frightened; and when the little chauffeur sprang out to crank up, he tore the skin from his thumb in his excitement and in his effort to get us out of danger. The blood gushed out of the wound, and, "That's terrible, Pierre!" I said, when he climbed back on the seat next to me, and I offered him my handkerchief.

"C'est la guerre!" he laughed; and I'll never forget his smile.

And then one remembers the sad face of a Countess, who, standing before her ruined château,

greeted us as if we had come up the walk in the days when her beautiful house would have had a candle lit in every room and a great fire on the hearth. French soldiers were now sleeping on the grass outside, weary after a two days' march, many with little dogs snuggled in their arms. And a few Boche prisoners were taking away some of the débris. Only a chimney was left standing here and there, and marble staircases were nothing now but a heap of ruins. The German shells had done their work well. The tragedy in the eyes of the Countess—I can never forget it; yet she said *"Bon jour"* to us just as though the world were running on smoothly, as though all she had had were not lost in the cataclysm of War. Patience was written on her countenance, and even forgiveness.

Then, too, I recall a certain gentleman, now middle-aged, whose every relative had crossed the red frontiers of Death. His château was just outside Soissons, and as he showed us through the great rooms that were left, we saw where the devastating Boche had ripped the velvet and leather coverings from every chair and sofa, and left rags in place of curtains. He was living now in only one room, and a devoted servant served us with tea from three cups—all that were left; and he brought out his precious hoard of sugar, insisting, with a smile, that it was for *les Américains*. All he had was ours. How pitifully little it was! Yet no murmur passed his lips.

I picked up a Boche helmet on a battlefield one day, a plain metal affair, wholly unlike the vainglorious headgear the Germans flaunted before a surprised world in 1914. I found one of these in a Frenchman's cottage in a tiny village, and side by side with mine of September, 1918, it looked indeed strange; a symbol of that lost arrogance and power of the Boche, made of brass and with a pointed spike, and in front the double Prussian eagle spreading its shining wings. There is nothing on the helmet I brought home, save the dent of a bullet, the decoration which many of them received; but on the 1914 casque there was not a scratch. It had been taken from a proud prisoner—an officer who had escaped all wounds. But wounds have since come to Germany. Utter defeat is hers, and never in all history did a country so richly deserve the fate that has overtaken it.

"They never fought fair!" What a record to go down the ages! And when one thinks of how nobly the British and French, the Italians, Belgians and Americans played the game, one pities a people who allowed themselves to be deluded by a mad war-lord now brought low indeed.

We have beaten the Hun. Let us not slip back to complacency and ease, for his propaganda will go forth in defeat as well as in victory, spreading its lies throughout the world. There are stern days yet to be faced; but with an Anglo-American Alliance an accomplished fact, we have little to fear. That

Alliance must come about. It is up to every American and every Britisher to see to it, to do his personal share in bringing about a closer relation between England and America.

We have shaken hands cordially. Does that mean nothing?

It means everything. It means enduring friendship, and the safety of the world.

THE END