W. Louis Harrell. M. D.

The DOCTOR'S DUFFEL BAG

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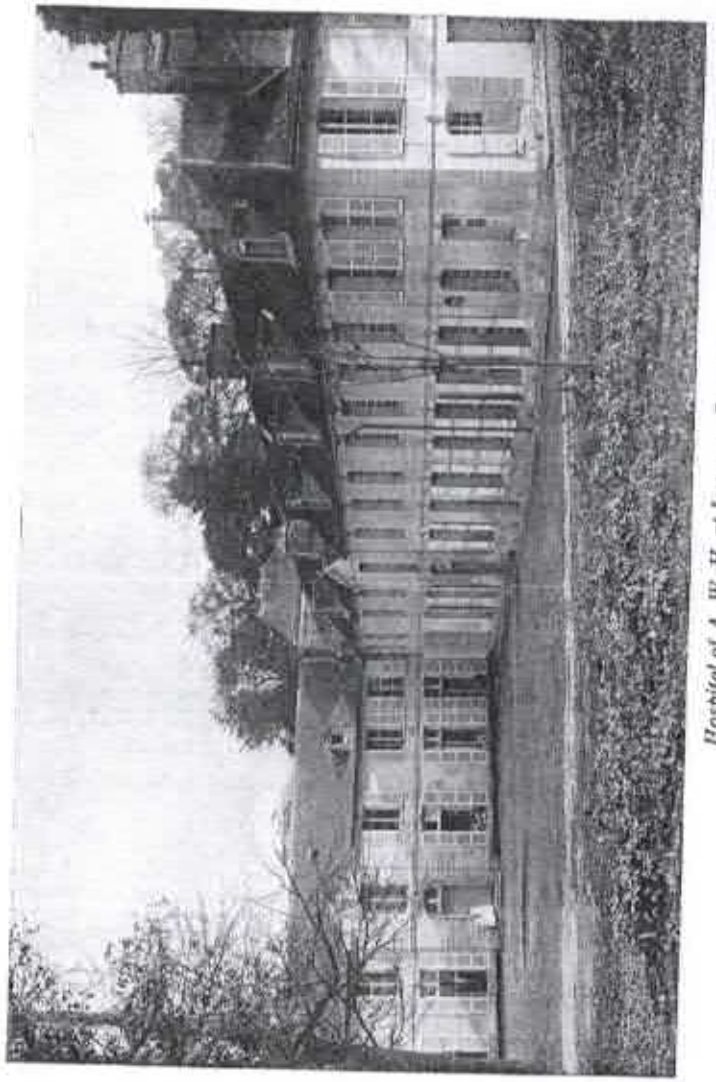


Hospital of A. W. H. at Luzancy, France

TO THE READERS

FROM Memory's duffel bag, with no padding of flowery imagination, have these few sketches been taken, not for entertainment, because during five years France has had no entertaining hours. They are bare pen pictures unframed, and they are here presented to the reader in the endeavor to bring home an appreciation of the true French character. The backbone of the French nation is its royal peasantry. To know that royalty, it is necessary to have lived with it, to have beheld its unflinching suffering, its uncomplaining sacrifice, its devotion, its loyalty, its gratitude, its unwavering faith.

¶ Such a privilege became ours while, we, as guests of France, conducted hospitals and dispensaries in the devastation, amongst the homeless returning refugees. If we have succeeded in depicting some of the glorious qualities that have made the French nation what it is, by showing the true nobleman, the peasant of the soil (than whom there is no finer, no more appreciative dweller on this footstool), our pen has served its purpose. If also we have emphasized, ever so slightly, the

French people's gratitude to America as it was expressed to us during fifteen months of medical work amongst them, our sad little pictures have not been drawn in vain.

M. Louise Hurrell, M. D.

Luzancy, France.

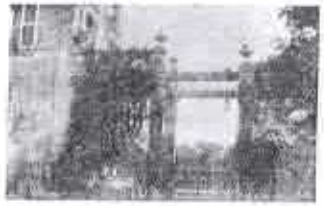
DEDICATED
TO THE LOYAL MEMBERS
OF THE
AMERICAN WOMEN'S HOSPITAL
UNIT No. 1
FRANCE

THESE few sketches have been taken from the actual lives of the French peasants as we found them in our hospital work in France, and they are presented to the reader in the endeavor to but imprint again the glory and the worth of these people who are the "royalty of France."

L. H.

Luzancy, France.

THE DUFFEL BAG



AS the treasures, one by one, are taken out of the duffel bag—the aviator's glove, the German sword, the peace placard, the American flag, the old French pistol, the hand grenade, the dozen other articles—there dawns upon the doctor, with perfect understanding, the blissful delight of the small boy's first pair of pockets. Of course, the duffel bag must have originated in that small boy's pockets.

¶ Memory paints a picture, as the aviator's glove is taken from the bag, of a cloudless day on the banks of the Marne near Charly. An ambulance, driven by one of the motor corps of an emergency hospital in the neighbourhood, stops suddenly; the chauffeur, a young girl of southern charm and beauty, jumps from her seat and in her soft Georgian accent upbraids "Constance," as she calls her car, "for carelessness in the use of her left hind foot," for there is a hole in her shoe of no small size. With deftness unbelievable, when those

small hands are considered, the shoe is removed, and oblivious utterly of the constantly increasing, wondering, admiring crowd of old men, women and children, the girl works on; finally she looks up, flushed from her labours, laughingly gives a final caress to her disgraced " Constance's " new shoe, and as she stoops to crank her car, at her feet from above her head drops this glove. A flirtation? She will never know; it may have fallen by accident, but it brought with vividness a realization of the ever watchful eyes of our " sky pilots."

¶ Beside this German officer's sword in its scabbard, marked by name and number of his regiment, imagination places a dwarfed little man of fifty-odd years. He was groaning with sciatica and almost unable to move when the doctor first saw him. It was a joy to see what simple pills accomplished in his case and he was soon at work in his wee garden, like his vegetables becoming taller every week. He was such a curious little man! Each vegetable had a name; Suzanne was a big fat carrot; Henri, a little bunch of lettuce, while Grandpa, the pride of the garden, was a huge cabbage. One day he appeared at the hospital and told an astonished nurse that he had brought the doctor " Grandpa " for dinner, from his small garden, and he had walked with his gift. Later he brought the sword and described how after emerging from a cellar, where he had hidden during the battle, he had found the dead

officer and taken the prize from him, and he said when giving it away, " You must take it, it is all I have to give you." In how many selfish lives would that statement have been the excuse for keeping, not giving?

¶ Do you see this faded, bedraggled, red, white and blue paper? It is the famous peace announcement. The ruined wall of a church in Soissons displayed it first on that momentous night and the doctor, searching for the one meagre cake-shop of the town, had asked two small boys, babes of about five, the direction. Can you get the pathos of the eager, " Madam, Madam, the peace " as they disregarded the question, pointing with tiny fingers to the paper? With glistening eyes the doctor said, " Let's have a party now " and with a group of kiddies that grew and grew she reached the cake-shop and bought out the small supply. But the procedure was so unusual, the cakes so quite unknown, that this one peace party lacked hilarity in that land of France.

¶ The exploded hand grenade was brought by a small lad who, while in the hospital, learned the American weakness for souvenirs. The first Sunday of his recovery was celebrated by searching Chateau-Thierry neighbourhood for war relics, and a much exhausted but triumphant little figure arrived in the late afternoon laden with his spoil in a piece of gunny sack. He had not forgotten any

one member of the staff in his gratitude. ¶ This old French pistol has a history indeed. It belonged to a collector of old fire-arms in Lille. When he was mobilized, and ere the Germans entered Lille, the soldier's daughter buried in her garden the collection, some twenty-four fire-arms. She announced that her mother was suffering from tuberculosis, and her home was avoided by the enemy, fully equipped with the knowledge of self-protection. One day, after reprimanding her maid for misconduct, while the anger of vengeance yet burned within the culprit, she reported the buried fire-arms to the German authorities. A suspicion of the perfidy reaching the young mistress that same night, she dug up the treasures, put them in small bundles and dropped them into the river. In her hurry she missed one revolver. Early the next a. m., four German soldiers appeared at her home and with long spears probed the ground—the fresh earth she explained by the need of cultivating the ground, and she had herself begun this task. Can you picture her agony for she knew that the river held one too few. It was not found by the Boche, but with the first spadeful of earth the father overturned after he was demobilized came to light this buried pistol. It almost sounds the death shot of the brave girl, as it lies here so eloquently mute.

¶ The flag of our country which is among these articles is a flag which, although so small, kept a

large estate untouched by even Germany when in 1914 her soldiers looted homes south of Chateau-Thierry, some twenty miles. It was tacked upon the wall in front of the Chateau and the Hun halted then as did he four years later in the same vicinity. Beloved Old Glory! The real duffel bag that we each possess we can not unlock with this key, however, for it is a duffel bag of memories that we carry back in our consciousness somewhere, and it needs no key.

THE MASS

LIKE battle-torn banners lie many of the villages of France in the devastated area, and if in any village remains the remnant of a wall, a well, or corner, back to that village come those whose baby feet years gone by have trodden those debris covered streets, and unbelievably soon, in all that ruin, again glow the hearth-fires.

¶ Having heard that some two hundred families had returned to such a village north of Chateau-Thierry, it was determined there to begin a dispensary for the sick and needy. Not far from the village is the former platform of Big Bertha, from where she made her eloquence so plainly heard in Paris, and many of the returned refugees were out on that first Sunday, viewing with wonder the huge machinery on which the gun rested, and the bit of track on which came the ammunition, so cleverly camouflaged by fresh trees, placed in holes between the ties. Upon inquiry in the village it was found that the ladies of the Chateau had returned as soon as had the villagers, and seeing the possibility of mutual aid, they were called upon in their ruined home. No praise too high can be given to these old

aristocratic families who have gone back to their own dismantled estates, suffering all kinds of discomforts in order to help as far as possible the community in which they live, by being in direct touch with the people. It has been a privilege to meet such people and also to see the privations they are enduring in saving their bit of France. This Chateau, an imposing one in a beautiful old park, lies in ruins. The chatelaine and her daughter are living in two rooms of the servants' quarters, an exquisitely painted screen and beautifully carved writing desk speaking of a luxury not consistent with the fireless grate and the oiled paper at the windows, protection from the cold and rain. There was warmth, however, there in the gratitude for the proffered help, and a glow in the accomplishment that day, through these ladies themselves, of what had seemed a wonder indeed to the villagers, the celebration of Mass in full form in a tiny chapel made from the trunks of trees battered by shot and shell. The wonderful old church lay a heap of stones only, nothing to distinguish altar from entrance. A week before the sacred vessels had been unearthed from a wood near-by, buried by the Boche for future use, no doubt, but the daughter of the manor in driving past a farm one day had caught a glint of gold beneath one of the barnyard piles. Here it was found that the priest's holy vestments had been hidden. They were joyfully rescued

and cleaned. So it was, that the returned refugees had that day celebrated the full church service, and given thanks for their homes, still theirs in their own country.

TWO PICTURES

TWO pictures are here given from a doctor's daily round of dispensary work. One is taken just at sunset. The ambulance drives down the street of the bombed and destroyed village, utter ruin everywhere, not one house left with one room habitable; utter desolation and silence. Suddenly the ruins of the church appear, the roof, towers, walls battered down, but in the chancel with an open arch behind showing the beautiful evening sky, hangs the Christ, full size, upon the cross, untouched. Unspeakably strange, that figure, in such ruin! Can you wonder that the inhabitants believe this miracle an omen of France's salvation? Suddenly down the desolate street, smiling a welcome for the stranger, strolls a woman in her wooden shoes. She is one of the three or four returned refugees, and she takes the Doctor into part only of her kitchen, all that is left of her home, where she has the remnants of a stove, a broken table, a pitcher, and some straw to sleep upon. It is still her home and

she smiles. Oh, these women of France, words cannot praise them! Think you the Boche has harmed that village?

¶ The other picture is seen in the morning. As the ambulance stops at the dispensary door a funeral cortege is passing through the streets. A tiny coffin, carried by children in white; a long, long line of mourners walking in sombre black, relieved here and there by a blue uniform. It is the last earthly journey of our little Jeanne, and in memory we see her wild terror as the mother brought her for a consultation one morning. The mother with sorrowful eyes excused her to us pathetically, explaining that it was not we who made little Jeanne cry, but our uniforms. Then followed the tale. The mother, this little frail girl of seven, and two younger children had been prisoners of the Germans for two years. During their retreat this summer they, with other French women, were marched miles and miles to keep the French guns from the Germans. One of her children was ill and died in her arms, but she was not allowed to stop and walked on for five hours carrying her dead, with the two others clinging to her skirts. Poor little Jeanne died of tubercular meningitis, so had no hideous memory with which to live year by year. And that woman of France, too, smiled.

THE SCHOOLMASTER

HE was a patient little schoolmaster and the first glimpse of him was when at the door of his schoolroom; where sat the rows of black-aproned, bare-kneed little French boys, he was asked for the keys of the dispensary door. He was a good friend and never was he seen without again and again telling his sorrowing worries over his old father and mother, who for four years had been prisoners of the Germans, far north in the Ardennes. He had had no word of them after the German occupation.

¶ A week or so following the Armistice his beaming face appeared at the dispensary door, and he said that he had that day received a letter from his parents who were well and anxious to hear from him. His joy was intense as he unfolded the plans he had already made to bring them to his home as soon as he could reach them. It took some time for him to prepare the necessary papers with which to travel and enter the territory where lived his parents, but at last he was equipped and started.

¶ War having destroyed much of civilization, eighteen miles from his native village was the

nearest approach that the railroad could give him, and eagerly he paced off the miles, unmindful of the big blisters which the rough stones of the road made upon his feet. When at last he stood in the doorway of his home, facing his old mother, it was to be told that only the day before she had been the sole unhappy mourner at the burial of her husband, the schoolmaster's loved father. He had had the influenza; privations and malnutrition and no medical care with him, as with fifty others in one week out of that village of a thousand, had made recovery impossible and death speedy.

¶ Then came the problem! How to take the little old mother to the son's home. Throughout the country-side the Germans had taken all the horses and mules, there was absolutely no means of conveyance anywhere. The schoolmaster was forced to leave her in her plundered home, even the cook stove had been taken from her, and walk back those eighteen miles to the nearest railroad. And so he tells still his worries, how he cannot send the mother food, nor clothes, nor fuel. Do the horrors of war cease when the fighting finishes?

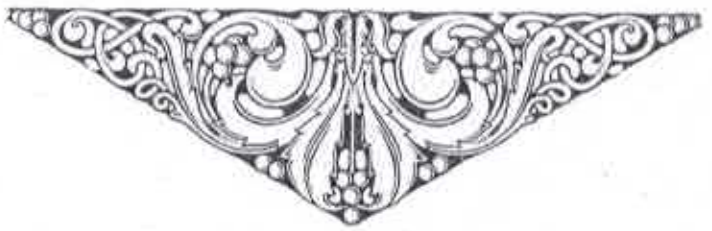
JEAN

IT may be because he is such a little boy, such a homesick little boy, that always his bed is the first one visited either by doctors or nurses. It may also be that his loving little ways have much endeared him to us, but more probably it is the interest in the outcome of the case that makes little five year old Jean our especial pet. He has a seriously pathetic face, with big brown eyes, and is a picture indeed in the brown and yellow sweater he wears as he sits in bed with his tiny plaster legs and plays with his blocks or books. He at first spent his days in weeping, first because he wanted his mother, secondly because he did not want his "leggins," as he calls the plaster casts into which his twisted feet and legs are put after operation. However, one day he expressed a desire to have his bed placed next to that of an old lady in the corner of the ward. We approved his choice and the friendship of the little lad, whom we hope to

soon see well and walking, and the poor old woman, nearing her end with a hopelessly incurable malady, is a very beautiful one. The nurses carry Jean to a bed in the other end of the ward during the day, where he is kept amused by the companionship of other children; there are the little girl who, passing through two attacks of appendicitis with no surgical care was operated but just in time a few weeks ago; the boy of eight with an ulcer on his eye, who surely thinks his black patch is but a decoration for all the good it does him when he is interested in his play, and the ever-present three or four children whose throats represent past deeds, or future needs.

¶ When the active legs of Jean's companions take them where his passive ones cannot follow, he plaintively begs to go " home " as he calls his bed near the little old lady, and passing down the ward we hear him whispering to her in his baby French, and we rejoice in the comfort each is to the other. When he plays alone he builds a house of his blocks and always puts therein his tin soldiers, calling them his " jolis prisoniers," and that leads us to tell this much of his story. His father was a prisoner of the Germans nearly four years and had been released but one short week when a doctor, on one of her dispensary rounds, spied the little boy with the club feet playing in a courtyard. She told the parents that those twisted feet could be straightened by the surgeon and begged that she be allowed to bring

him to the hospital. Could any praise for this work speak louder than the eager, immediate consent of those parents?



THE LOVERS

ONE day, about a week before the great Armistice had been signed, André Calette, a vigorous old man of the royal peasant class of France, sat holding his wife's frail hand while he read to her with disappointed resignation the letter, which he himself had so hungrily consumed and bravely accepted, ere stumbling with it over the masses of ruined stones and mortars that composed his once comfortable home. In the one little rudely constructed room neatness and cleanliness ruled supreme, and there lay the invalid wife; a patient, wasted little figure whose pathetic eyes wrung the husband's heart as he read to her the cruel news that the son, so eagerly expected, would not be home that following week. The soldier ended his letter cheerfully with the statement of his firm faith in the speedy termination of the war, in the recital of a rumour of the approaching armistice, and added, as the compensation to him and his parents for their mutual disappointment, that " at

least the allowance of bread for two need not now be made to nourish three," making in true Poilu style a joke out of even that grim fact.

¶ There was a sorrowful silence following the completion of the old man's hard task as his voice lingered lovingly over the last messages. Through the open doorway the eyes of both looked out upon a scene of desolation, the village street a jumbled mass of rubbish, at the extreme end of which one tower only remained of the beautiful old church, called the "Little Cathedral,"—at their very door an aeroplane, as it fell in all its wreckage. It was symbolic of their own poor lives, two daughters and a son victims of the war, taken from them within a year, their home and property destroyed. For the first time, now this afternoon, each secretly acknowledged the existence of another approaching calamity, which each had put aside to be faced only after the joyous visit of this remaining soldier son.

¶ A resolute courage, born of that secret dread, had driven, weeks before, the little wife back to her desolate home in the devastated village, and now that same dread caused in her a sudden decision. Was it because she feared that without medical help for herself her son would come too late? The old man sat stunned with the letter still in his hands, as his wife planned to enter a hospital for care and treatment, and tenderly, too, planned how he should

live without her. Then the sufferer dropped off into the sleep of exhaustion, old André still sitting by her side, benumbed with the heartache within him, when a rap aroused him and upon his going to the door a passing traveler handed him a second letter. This was an official one and contained but two short lines, news of the son's death, shot but two hours ere the great end, pitifully soon after his own message home.

¶ The old man sat down again at the bedside, looked at his sleeping wife, at the two letters still in his hand, the one so full of life, the other so full of death, at the ruined home, the wrecked aeroplane, the deserted village, the bombed church, at the village Calvary with the untouched Christ. His friends, home, children, were gone, his wife was going, but his country was saved; his sons had given their lives for that. The mother was soon to be with her boys. His faith lived, so old André fought his battle. When the wife wakened she saw no signs of conflict in her husband's face, and the second letter had been put away.

¶ A week later, in a tent hospital some fifteen miles away, the little lady lay with eyes and smiles that radiated day by day expectancy and love, until old André appeared for his precious visit, and as her smile grew brighter, her strength grew fainter. So these two played the game, she believing that he knew not how fast the end approached, he planning

for the home-coming of the boy who had preceded her; lovers to the last, each forgetting self for the other. Then came the day when André stood in a corner of the wrecked church with his dead; debris round about, altar, choir, dome, saints and pillars in an unrecognizable heap, staples in the walls where had been stabled but recently the horses of the Germans; but never a more impressive service, never a greater dignity or sacredness than at this burial of one of the royalty of France.

LIGHT AND SHADE

TWO demobilized soldiers returned to Luzancy one week and for each was a wonderful fete prepared to welcome him. Listen first to the story of the one upon whom war's fortune smiled.

¶ Not many years before the war, a little lad of thirteen found himself with but a single relative in the world and she a poor, helpless, paralytic grandmother. Love was the only asset of the two, but a bank account of that with interest makes a fortune, so our boy and his grandmother were not poor. The boy worked by the week for farmers near by and on Sunday did the cooking, cleaning, washing and tilling of the small garden plot belonging to the home. The devotion of this boy was the marvel of the countryside. He found time to make himself a crude wagon in which to wheel the invalid out of doors, and in the summer time, ere leaving early for his work, used to leave his grandmother, a quaint picture amongst her beloved grape vines, happy for the day with her growing vegetables and flowers. During the long winter days kindly neighbours called at regular hours to keep the hearth-fires burning. The two were as happy as

children until there came the call to arms, and in France that call has no exception. The young man left his grandmother in care of the *Maire*. Then came the evacuation of the town and flight of the refugees, and later the return home of a grateful handful of villagers, for Luzancy escaped destruction. The grandson, wounded slightly several times, finished his four years military service and he came home that Sunday to his joyful old grandmother, with not only the Croix de Guerre but all of the honours for bravery that the French government could bestow—to resume his former life and duties.

¶ The other soldier had a sad, sad story and all the glory surrounding the *blessé* can never stop one pang of the suffering ahead.

¶ The young man left his wife and baby, answering the war call at the same time as did our boy from the same village. He was almost immediately taken prisoner by the Germans, and his wife and her baby laboured in the fields for four years, obtaining thirty cents a day upon which to live. The prisoner, with others, was put to work at a most dangerous task, clearing shells from old battle-fields. One day a shell exploded, blowing off both legs just below the hips. He lived. He, too, came home that Sunday. He formerly had worked in a brickery belonging to the *Maire* who again made a place for him where he could earn a few cents a

day to keep himself occupied. The poor wife was worn out and could no longer be counted a wage-earner. One of the members of the hospital, from a fund entrusted to her care, arranged through the *Maire* to leave a sum of money with which to educate and clothe this man's little girl, until she is old enough to assume her responsibilities, and it is hoped here, as with the boy of thirteen, there will be another soldier soul.

THE TROUSSEAUX

THIS is the story of the trousseaux of two French girls, and as the girls told it they wept, but their tears were not for the loss of the beautiful bed and table linen, which French brides provide not only for their own lives' use, but also for that of the family which they dream will be theirs; but those tears were of gratitude, that through their means many of our American boys had had their sufferings eased.

¶ It was simply told. They had come to the hospital for consultation, walking some eighteen kilometres from a village near Chateau-Thierry, both sad eyed, slender girls, just out of their teens. The father had been a well-to-do farmer. The sisters were engaged to brothers and had their bridal chests well filled with linens when the war broke out. Both young men were killed early in the conflict. Last year, just before the battle of Belleau Woods, when the inhabitants of this village were all ordered to evacuate, these people left, driving

before them three cows and taking what articles they could carry in a pillow case.

¶ Weeks after they went back to that village, utterly destroyed, and began their life again; dwelling in the cellar of their previous home. One of the surgeons who had been with the American Division at the battle of Belleau Woods, revisiting the now famous district, stopped at this village of Lucy le Bocage and meeting this family told how, being cut off from all surgical supplies, he had found these chests of linen more precious to him in his hour of need than gold, and had used their contents to bandage the wounds of our American soldiers. If those who preached a propaganda of French lack of appreciation could have seen the real joy which those girls expressed, because they had been the means of helping even that much the glorious American heroes, for some short space at least, their tongues would have found silence.

THE WAIF

CROSSING the Marne at Luzancy any afternoon of the first week of this May, the traveler's attention would have been attracted to a small boy in black apron and blue poilu cap with a huge bunch of flowers in his belt, lilacs, daisies or forget-me-nots as the day offered, sitting in an old punt blissfully holding a fishing rod, the radiant face and utter content of the little figure, a veritable Izaak Walton, giving no suspicion of the pathetic history attached to it. It was in the effort to efface some horror of the past that one of the doctors had gladly purchased the fishing tackle at the small boy's request, recognizing the happy solace of the piscatorial art when indulged in by one of its devotees.

¶ Ten days before the fishing began, at the close of a cold, dark, rainy day, this same little lad had entered the village soaked to the skin in his ragged clothes, cold, tired and hungry. Sobbing, he asked where the hospital of the American women was and was brought in by a kind-hearted villager. The

Waif was taken into the heart of the family, fed, bathed and put to bed. He said he was an orphan and had walked for three days from Lizy-sur-Ourcq. His fatigue lasted for two days, then he told the *Maire* his story.

¶ He had lived at Beauvais with his parents and a seventeen year old sister. When the Germans had bombarded this city his family had been evacuated to Lizy-sur-Ourcq at which they lived until the influenza epidemic of last October, when both the father and mother contracted the grippe and died. Shortly afterwards the unnatural sister took the train for Paris leaving the little brother uncared for and crying at the entrance of the station. From that time on the French soldiers stationed at Lizy had fed the boy, he had slept where he could, and had no doubt learned much that was in advance of his tender years. With the withdrawal of the troops from the town, the Waif was again homeless. A pitying woman, whose home had been entirely destroyed, faced the boy toward Luzancy telling him that there were some American women who would care for him. For three days he journeyed, continually finding travellers who knew of the hospital and could encourage him with the same hope, and direct him forward.

¶ So the Waif became a part of the staff at Luzancy, with his desire to be loved and to share his love, his haunting fear that made his search for each of

the staff every half hour, his passion for flowers and birds, his bubbling boyish pranks that showed each day his return to normal, and above all his happiness and faith in " Les Amricaines."

BLUETTE

OUR patient, little gentle child-mother, Olga, had passed on into the Greater Life but one hour, when the postman brought her precious card from the soldier-husband, long a prisoner of the Germans. The card had been written before the coming of the wonderful Armistice. For nearly four years these messages had come at intervals, and in these later days we in the hospital had been allowed to read many. This one began as ever, " My dear Olga and well beloved." It continued, " I am contented that you are so well taken care of in the hospital. I have not received the box you say was sent from home. I am well. Give my love to Bluette. Kisses to her and you. Your fond husband."

¶ Yes, we had taken care of her, we had loved her, but we could not keep her until that weary person had had one glad smile from the bride who had been but his for three short months, ere the world's inferno began. Her husband had been captured by

the Germans almost at once, but he had been allowed to write at stated times and his few lines were priceless to the girl-wife. And to Olga had come the wonderful gift of motherhood to console her for her lost husband, and when her baby came she named her Bluette, remembering ever the dearly beloved French uniform of the father.

¶ When the baby was about a year old Olga, one day, fell from her bicycle and was apparently unharmed. But suddenly, a few months later, she found herself unable to stand upon her leg. After weeks of helplessness and suffering she was taken to a hospital in a distant town where she was fixed in a frame for five months. Then came the swift advance of the Germans and for days this hospital was bombarded. Her people came for her as soon as they could. In agony she was put upon a load of hay in a two wheeled cart and jogged in terror for one whole day, until she again reached her tiny immaculate home.

¶ It was from there that one of our doctors brought her in the early summer to us. Her hip injury proved to be a serious one, following a tubercular process. She was made comfortable in a mechanical appliance and lay for four months a sweet, uncomplaining patient. One pathetic card which we read from her husband said he had talked her symptoms over with a fellow prisoner, a doctor, and the knowledge which these two gleaned from her long

description of her case was a wonder to us. ¶ One day, to surprise Olga, little Bluette was brought to her. Calls miles away for dispensary work made it possible. Bluette had then over three bright years in her book of life and was a rarely sweet child. The few hours Olga spent with her baby girl were joyful ones. It was always a great pleasure to bring to Olga a tiny ribbon or a card for her to send to her little daughter, and her appreciation of it was most touching. She had slowly gained until she was able to knit for a few hours at a time, and we had bought her some soldier blue yarn with which she was making a muffler for her wee Bluette.

¶ Suddenly lung complication appeared and we saw that her gain was only an apparent one. As soon as the Armistice was signed we hurried to her bedside with the news, but it came too late for even one minute's joy for Olga. She did not comprehend it, and passed on to the perfect everlasting peace, leaving to us the sweet memory of her patient life.

THE FARM

A BEAUTIFUL farm for sale; unusual sight in France where for generations land descends from son to son. Thus was it learned why the old gray buildings and far-reaching acres bore that sign, somehow a piteous sight for eyes to read in this country of age and tradition.

¶ There had been an only child, heir to this estate, a boy of culture and talent, and the parents had with pride seen him procure the highest degrees in the College of Agriculture, and begin the practice of his learning on the soil. Then the war summons came and the boy departed. After ten months there came no more news from the battle-fields and the trenches from the absent one. Letters were written to the War Department, to the Colonel of the regiment, but he was reported missing, with no details of how or where. Years passed. Six weeks ere the Armistice was signed the broken-hearted father died, worn out with worry and grief. Three weeks after the last awful gun had been fired there came

to this farm a weary old man of twenty-eight, the companion of the boy of whom we write. When the poor mother heard from him the story of the end, when she knew for a certainty that the hope which made her see her son alive as a prisoner had been a false one, she became a raving maniac. This is what was told her.

¶ Her son had been made a member of the kitchen squad that last day of his life, and he with three others was passing the meals to the men in the trenches under fire. A heavy fog fell upon them. They with their kettles of hot soup were lost in it, and found themselves in the German trenches. Discovering their error they ran back, the Germans following. Two were caught immediately, but the boy and his friend fought like tigers until the boy, stabbed in the back, fell forward, his last words: "You cowards, call you this fighting?" The bearer of the tale was taken prisoner and had aged full thirty years in three, ere he was released. His first sad mission was to this unfortunate mother whose mental poise was completely upset by the news.

¶ So, on that farm one reads the simple words, "For Sale."

ROBERT

HE was a frail, underfed, anemic boy of seventeen, who had been evacuated from a town near Chateau-Thierry and put to work, or rather we should say to overwork, upon a farm south of Paris. During the heat of one summer's day he was found unconscious in the field and was eventually brought to the hospital. He had typhoid in its severest form and with it a complicating pneumonia. For weeks and weeks the fever raged and finally it was decided that even youth could no longer help the doctor. Then one day, upon returning from our rounds, we brought to see this son the poor father who had taken his family back to his desolate home in the bomb-stricken village.

¶ The family consisted of fourteen, our patient being the eldest. The father told us his tale as we drove home in the ambulance, and we wondered not that the man wept as he talked, for he was an hysterical wreck. An American soldier once told us that we need not sympathize with many of our

refugees, because they waited long after they were warned before leaving their homes. How feel you, reader, about these people? Call you it an easy thing to walk out and leave not only your beloved home and belongings, but home and belongings that were beloved by your father and his father, remembering that these people have ties and loves unknown to our new world. Such a man was this, a basket weaver, a man worth in cash 100,000 francs, who had lived from childhood in the home where his father and grandfather had lived before him, like him weaving baskets. Remember, too, that for months had come the threat of the Germans, but for months threats only. When the news came for him to evacuate he hesitated, and in that hesitation he was caught in a pocket between the attacking Huns and the attacked French. He told us how, with his three youngest children he was running down a field outside the village into a corner of a wall, with armed men advancing on all sides, in the night, when suddenly a bomb burst at his very feet completely burying his children and dazing himself. Frantically he dug under it, miracle to tell, he found that the three children were uninjured. So he escaped, his hesitation and disregard of military command costing him much. All this, his suffering, the children's hunger, the hardships, his mental anguish ere his entire family were united, he told us in bursts of tears, and we felt that it

helped him much to retell the tale to sympathetic listeners.

¶ At the hospital for days we kept him while the battle with death was on, feeling that food, a bed, and our sympathy did much to balance the man.

¶ Finally the boy began to gain, and the father, well content, returned home. Our patient was with us many weeks, his proudest possession an American soldier cap which some one had given him, and that pinched face in the khaki will be a sight long remembered by the members of our staff. Rapidly, after the Armistice, the home of our basket-weaver in the village showed improvement, and that family, in whom we were so vitally interested, were soon beyond the need of help.

THE SAILOR

ONE of the most interesting patients that France offered to the dispensary doctor was an alert, sharp-eyed little man of eighty-three, whose beautifully shaped head with its long curly hair and its soft beard would have been the adoration of an artist of Michael Angelo's time. He was sitting at the door of his home amongst his beautiful dahlias when first he was seen, a picture never to be forgotten. When, upon invitation, his house was entered, there a treasure trove to make the soul of the collector become quite wild with enthusiasm, presented itself. Upon the walls were pictures rare, wonderful old bits of costly porcelain, bronzes, swords, silks, and priceless leather. Throughout the room were articles of various rare woods from all over the world. Perhaps part of the benefit the old man received from the doctor's visit was the result of her ecstacy over his beloved possessions, because there is healing in kindred souls.

¶ He had been educated in France for the priesthood, but before taking Orders had met her without whom his life could not be lived, and while fighting with his conscience, while yet undecided

between her and the Church, she had died. Disconsolate, he had become a sailor and had spent all of the later years of his life on the seas, a sailor without rank. At the age of seventy he had been forced to give up his life on the seas and had come home to the land of his father where was the wife he had taken unto himself some twenty years previously.

¶ The old man complained of dizziness and upon inquiry into the cause of it this very unusual occupation was revealed. Into a big room near the window he led the doctor and showed her skein upon skein of different shades and colours of fine silk thread. Then he produced a portfolio containing hundreds of beautiful birds, natives of France, Japan and South America; and hundreds of delicate flowers of these countries, all in nature's colours. He told her this was his handiwork done with these threads of silk, and showed how with a brush and glue these tiny silk threads were made into foliage and plumage. The idea and technique were most unusual. The close application without glasses solved the dizziness. The old man, when asked how long he had been doing the work, replied, "For the last five years, since gardening became too hard for me. I invented this as I had to keep occupied and a man must have a hobby or grow old."

¶ This patient has been labelled one of the world's "wise men."

THE AMMUNITION DUMP

ONE who doubts the indelible results of the past four years upon the nervous systems of the poor French peasant inhabitants of the devastated regions, a result which even their fellow-countrymen of happier provinces cannot comprehend, should have been a visitor at Blerancourt a short time ago, when for the third time the inhabitants of St. Aubin were evacuated because of shot and shell. This third time fire only being the enemy, we hope no hand of Hun behind the shells as in former days.

¶ St. Aubin had begun to exist again; living possessions, priceless poultry, rabbits, had once again begun to make life happy for the peasants; a school had been started; day by day life had assumed a more normal aspect. Poor St. Aubin! It is a village composed mainly of old people, women and children. We were once told by the *Maire* that only six men, of all who had left the village when the call to arms had come, remained after the battles

were ended. Fortunately, on the day described, most of the inhabitants were in the fields when a terrible explosion, followed again and again by others, told the terror-stricken hearers that the ammunition dumps on the outskirts of the village were on fire. Into Troisly Loire rushed the maddened people, their one idea, that of finding caves for shelter. For half an hour there came a steady stream of people, their flight an indescribable picture and one that the two dispensary doctors can never forget. Meanwhile, in their beds in the hospital at Blerancourt, the patients lay, one after the other of the more seriously ill going into collapse, the others lapsing into perfect despair and absolutely disregarding the repeated assurances that these were accidental explosions; all were obsessed with the idea that war had begun again with another swift advance of the enemy.

¶ Meanwhile, hour after hour the explosions continued, St. Aubin was entirely cut off and with sad hearts all waited to hear of fatalities, of poultry and cattle destroyed and St. Aubin again levelled to the ground. A soldier on a bicycle stopped at the hospital to say that 10,000 gas shells were in the dump and to prepare. Nurses and doctors made impromptu gas masks for each bedside and waited. Then the stream of refugees began to arrive, children crying for parents, parents searching for children, old women of over eighty carried on

chairs. As the weeping crowd were being fed near the hospital the patients could not be forced to believe that this was other than the scene enacted before, the world fleeing before the Boche. Within the hospital tents many were put to bed, but throughout the night the explosions continued; parents came in and out, wild eyed, searching for their children, and more than one happy reunion took place before our sympathetic eyes.

¶ Entrance to St. Aubin was forbidden, but early next day a few daring people secretly sought their homes and the wonderful news leaked out that no one had been injured, that none of the live stock was harmed, and that but one house had been destroyed.

¶ For a week the government kept the inhabitants out of the village while the remainder of the shells were being exploded; then with their stout hearts these people returned ready for the next horror that fate might hold for them. The hour before leaving the sheltering tents at Blerancourt all the old people, none under eighty years of age, celebrated with the Curé, on a rude altar made of gasoline containers, a Mass of Thanksgiving for their care and protection. How many years of calm will it take to erase the years that hold such storms?

ST. PAUL OF THE WOODS

IT was late afternoon in the dark winter of France's sorrow. Poor Paulette Duprey, an old peasant woman —whose hitherto happy, prosperous life had been passed in the same house where now for forty-eight hours she had drained the dregs of deepest misery—with trembling hands and reddened eyes was preparing with deftness, nevertheless, the evening meal. In her well-ordered sitting room a group of German soldiers were smoking, drinking, singing. Two days before, into this peaceful little village of old men, women and children had come the dreaded invaders, and Paulette's home was only one of the many that had been appropriated; her cellar had been emptied of its few remaining bottles of wine in spite of tearful protest on the part of the old woman; she had been ordered to kill her chickens and rabbits, and she had cooked them with sickening heartache; but that day, it seemed to Paulette, that the very acme of human endurance had been

reached, when she had watched hour by hour the soldiers sawing down the orchards of the village. She had seen her trees, nineteen in number, planted by her ancestors, pride of the village, fall one by one, and she herself yet lived.

¶ Poor Paulette, there was yet more to suffer. As she and Jean had slept on the kitchen floor, the Germans having taken their bed, they had said, "but we have each other" little dreaming it was the last night for even that.

¶ Paulette, peeling the carrots for the soup as ordered by her captor now and then peered down the road anxiously for Jean. He was one of the village fathers and with the *Maire* and Curé had been called to appear before the German staff. Finally the old man appeared, greeted by a jeering shout of laughter from the half-drunken soldiers, who pulled off his worn corduroy jacket and kicked into the road his muddy sabots which, as usual, he had left on the stone step. The old man with a grave and troubled face told his wife to hastily dress and accompany him, as the order had been given that all the inhabitants were to assemble in the village square at three o'clock to answer to roll call; that no one was exempt, old, sick, infants, all must answer in person.

¶ Without his coat Jean and Paulette in their wooden sabots trudged down the road to the square stopping now and then to sob at the sight of the

fallen trees, stopping at the village Calvary in its setting of sombre yew trees to cross themselves and whisper a prayer.

¶ It was dusk when all had assembled in the square at the foot of the hill, on whose summit was the church where each had been baptized, or confirmed, or married, and it was a terrified group that waited with strained white faces, no one missing, not even the three day old mother nor her child. There, too, were crippled old men, women feebly resting on their canes, in all, some pathetic two hundred and fifty souls. Then the German officers appeared and the roll call began. As each answered, he or she was assigned to the right or the left side of the square and soon it was seen that on the one side were the very young children, the very old and the sick, while on the other were those who showed even the least robustness. So it was when Jean's name was called and the rugged old man stepped forward, despite his seventy odd years he was separated from Paulette and was one of the hundred and twenty-three whom the Germans deemed capable of hard labor.

¶ When the two groups were completed German guards appeared, and, without allowing the selected workers even one last farewell, marched them before them in the rain and mud. Paulette's last sight of Jean was as he passed her with arms extended toward her.

¶ For hours these prisoners marched forward, finally reaching a camp where they were interned for three days, housed in impossible degradation, then Jean with some of the other men was taken far up in the Ardennes. Here he was put to work hauling logs for a most wonderful underground saw-mill with perfect electrical equipment. After months of hard work he injured his back and when no longer of use was allowed to leave. After walking many days he reached his home just after the signing of the Armistice.

¶ This time, however, no wife greeted him, for a short time after Jean's departure Paulette had been forced to spend an entire night on her doorstep in the snow and ice, while the Germans caroused within. She had died within two days, from exposure, and as old Jean looked across his ruined orchard and back at his wrecked house he said reverently, "Thank God, I have no wife."

THE SYRINGA BLOSSOMS

A BUNCH of faded syringa on the doctor's table speaks eloquently of the gratitude of a poor old French peasant. It was given with such an apology "because this year's flowers are scarce in the devastated regions." The poor, bruised blossoms which spent a whole hot day in the dispensary ambulance without reviving water, curiously reminded one of the giver. She, poor thing, is bravely living in one room, her bed, table and stove being her only material possessions; but, as she welcomes her son one knows she still possesses that priceless treasure, an undaunted spirit, that, amidst all the evidences of pitiable cruelty to an old age of over eighty, can look beyond it all and smile.

¶ It was when opening an abscess in this son's hand upon a previous visit that we became acquainted with the old lady. She is hopelessly crippled and the flowers on the table tell to the doctor, who knows, the gift of body and spirit that came with

their gathering; for a broken hip, sustained four years ago, makes moving an agony to the poor sufferer. When at the beginning of the war the sudden order for evacuation came, in her frightened hurry she fell and broke her hip. With several others she was put into a two wheeled cart, and with her poor broken leg dangling from the back of the cart, was joggled fifteen kilometres. Then followed the months of refugee life, sleeping in barns and caves, tortured with the dirt and vermin which resulted from the crowded conditions. Now, despite her affliction, she works daily in her beautiful garden spot, and only those who have seen the tiny French gardens can picture the little squares of ground with their rows of vegetables peeping up above the surface, saying every day to the mass of ruins in the midst of which they lie like bits of Japanese pottery, " See the life of this France the Germans have not touched."

¶ That same spirit shines out to you in the face of the ancient peasant woman with the shattered body. Can you plant your seed in nobler soil?

THE CURÉ

FOREVER, with his blessing and his beloved spirit, shall dwell in our memories our own little Curé of Luzancy. A much crippled victim of rheumatism, it was only with severe physical suffering, and helped by the sturdy arm of one of our workers, he many times answered the sudden call, often after midnight, to administer spiritual healing when our material medicine had failed. There was always the ready, gentle " yes, my daughter," in answer to our rap at his door, and while we waited and heard his old mother aiding him into his apparel and grumbling the while at the cruel necessity that exposed him more to added pains, we knew that his eagerness to respond to our call was greater than our own. For since the separation of Church from State in France, many have been the ones who no longer respect the teachings of any Church.

¶ Our acquaintance was made with him one Sunday of our early days, when a doctor having

been called to a neighbouring town had returned with a poor unfortunate girl, dying with a quick pneumonia. The tender sympathy of the Curé to the sufferer as he administered to her the last comforts of the Church touched us, and told us the manner of man he was. She, poor wayward child, as she gave to him her mother's picture, showed how grievously she needed him—not us. Not until the Great Peace came upon her the next day, did he leave her.

¶ We have a picture of our Curé upon one of the feast days for the children of his parish, as he stood by the altar, before which knelt the little acolytes where were the candles amongst dahlias red, and white cosmos, the boys themselves with their round red caps and gowns of lace looking like larger blossoms. There, however, stood the children, and 'twas here the sombre note was struck for these little children were sufferers for "la Patrie," and black were their garments.

¶ One treasured memory of our year abroad is the beautiful French Midnight Mass celebrated that first Christmas after the Great War, in the eleventh century church of Luzancy. The old French hymns, which for centuries had been sung at that same hour, in that same place, again proclaimed a nation's praise and thanksgiving, and never had the "Adeste Fidelis" so triumphant a

sound as when it reverberated from pillar to pillar on that night. One day, upon our expressing our gratitude to the Curé for his quick response and willing, to our many calls upon him, with charming courtesy he replied, "I am only walking in your footsteps"—praise to us beyond comparison.

¶ One night during a bad storm an unexpected case had been brought to us in a desperate condition, and it was decided not to wait until morning for the Curé; one of the members went for him. He was unusually infirm that night and leaned heavily upon the arm of the young woman who, with his robes of office and a lantern in her other hand, was guiding him. Suddenly with true American audacity she exclaimed, "Oh, Monsieur le Curé, what would the old ladies of the village say about us if they could see us now in this romantic midnight walk!" Again shone out his courtesy—"Sh! Sh! my daughter; but it is very pleasant."

THE QUESTION

FRANCE'S claims of indemnity must be lowered." Somewhere the writer read that sentence, and on her journey that day through the devastation it rang in her mind with jangled degrees of injustice, ignorance and inhumanity that refused to be silenced. The pity of it is that no matter to what heights French indemnity can be piled, it can never begin to make reparation. Let us take you on a tour with us, and will you agree?

¶ Remember, too, that it is not the wrecked house, nor the lost homes that excite your pity. It is the contact with the returning refugees, the sad conversations with the man digging in his garden there, or the woman struggling under her load of wood, that show you what the ruin is. Here is a town of at one time two thousand inhabitants. We meet a Frenchman on the outskirts. He tells us that twelve people have returned, that his wife died while a prisoner, that he is preparing a room in his cellar for his mother and his child, that he

walked fifteen kilometres to bring straw for them to sleep on, that he is on his way fifteen kilometres again for a few kitchen utensils. As he leaves, with true French courtesy, he says, " Ladies, I can offer you the freedom of the town. No door but is open to you." A little distance in the town, a young woman is met and upon asking why she has returned to this she replies simply, " Where else in the world is there a place for me? My husband and I were born here. Here is our land, all of our friends are from here." That is her answer. Two walls of her barn still stand and a lean-to has been put up against them where she lives. Her husband has been killed in the war. Although she has no seed for her garden she has spaded up the ground. The *Maire* of the town being dead, she tells us pathetically, that she will probably have no seed, and when she says good-bye, these are her words, with a brave smile, " Next year, perhaps, the garden will be planted properly."

¶ In all of these towns it is curious to see the little neatly spaded garden spots, so many times the only place of the home. In the next town we meet the *Maire* who is working in the field. Four families have returned to this place, but the town itself is teeming with Chinamen. There are nine hundred of them cleaning ammunition from the fields. The *Maire* takes us into the little hut which has been put up for him and courteously offers us a

chair in his *Mairie,* taking the stamp to show us that such is the place where we are. He tells us that unless there are horses sent at once the gardens of those places will be unable to be planted. He himself has lost three sons in the war, and two little grandchildren playing in front of the door are planting what they call their father's grave.

¶ So many unexploded hand grenades strew our way through the neighbouring village, that it is with difficulty we pick our way through the street. Two families have returned to this town, one of them being the *Maire*, and in this town the wells still contain the poisoned water of the Germans, so these two families are obliged to go miles for their water supply. They are attempting to put up habitations for the summer from wood which they are dragging from the trenches.

¶ In our next town we met a young lieutenant who says his business it is to take the bombs from the little gardens; that it has been made a penalty for any one to till the ground until the bombs have been removed. In two days he has exploded one hundred and fifty. Although a Frenchman from the Southern part of France he volunteers this statement, that to him it is incomprehensible, the return of the people to this land so utterly desolate.

¶ How much indemnity, think you, would be required for these four towns alone? A pathetic instance was noted by us on our return home. An

old man, whose work was to repair the road-beds so full of holes from the cannonading, moved along the road as he worked. A burst shell containing water in which was a daffodil and three little primroses was by his side, the only thing of beauty in that day's journey.

THE SON

IT was just after the patient had been removed from the operating table, where she had had a leg amputated, that her history was told. She was an old, old lady, living alone in a neighbouring town, and the doctor had found her there helpless and miserable, suffering the tortures of a hopeless gangrene, needing and lacking nursing, cleanliness and food. She had been an influential woman in the town where she resided, but that was before the onslaught of the Germans, at the beginning of the war.

¶ The evacuation of this old lady and her flight with the rest of the town's people is told graphically in "My Home in the Field of Honour," and during the hardships of that flight began the trouble in her leg which terminated in its amputation.

¶ She had but just been admitted to the hospital when there came the following letter from her son who, it was learned, was a doctor in the French army. It was so tender in its tone and so touching in its filial sympathy that the privilege of knowing such a man must be given to others:

¶ "To the Doctors: I have much consolati[redacted]

tranquillity of mind in feeling that my mother is with you. On account of my military obligations it is impossible for me to do for my mother what I should. My mother lives in a manner I do not approve and I am sure her surroundings have retarded her recovery. The neighbours are good and do all they can, but they are all poor and ignorant of her case. She has had much sorrow, has lost many loved ones and this has helped to break down her spirit and make her life a deplorable one. But it is not my place to reproach her. I come to ask your indulgence and patience for my mother because she has suffered much. I, myself, am an object of charity. My own home has been under German dominion since August 29, 1917. It was liberated November 6, 1918. I have made an attempt to go back to my home. I hope to go, but it will be only to find ruin and desolation. I am thankful to you beyond words in my hour of need."

¶ So a duty well performed lightened somewhat that man's burden.

THE HEART OF FRANCE SPEAKS TO AMERICA ON TOUSSAINT

FOR the weeping mothers of America do the sorrowing women of France a devoted duty perform, and let no lonely woman feel that her dear dead lies forgotten in a foreign land. Honored everywhere are the American graves, and in travelling in the devastated region throughout the season of flowers rarely does one pass a grave, without its touching tribute placed upon it by some aching heart with a prayer for that other mourner. In the words of Scripture, these women, "keep that which is committed to their trust."

¶ On All Saints' Day, everywhere, were the resting places of American boys covered with France's loveliest flowers, for November first in France is Memorial Day, and roses, violets and pansies yet bloom.

¶ In the little village of Luzancy, where was located in a beautiful old chateau an evacuation hospital for the Americans, a touching tribute was given by the townspeople in memory of twelve

American heroes who lie buried in the park. The graves were bordered with boxwood, symbol of immortality, and covered with pansies, and as one read the names on the disks upon the crosses which marked each place, these words come uppermost, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." Would that each mother could have had a glimpse of this scene last *Toussaint!* Down the narrow village street between walls gray and ancient came the school children, dressed in black, but carrying bunches of gay flowers and twelve American flags which surrounded four French flags; the last for the graves of the village sons fallen in battle.

¶ Back of these marched the *Maire* of the village and the townspeople, some three hundred, all in sombre black; the late autumn sunshine and the bright foliage of the trees relieving the gloom. The French Flags were placed with flowers in the little cemetery of the twelfth century church, and then into the park came the little children and the others to the resting place of the Americans. Very touching was the awe with which the children placed the flowers and flags upon the graves, and during the speech of the *Maire* there were few dry eyes—the true sympathy of a wonderful people whose gratitude and love for the American race can not be bounded. To the people spoke M. Chalamon, the *Maire*:

¶ "Custom and tradition require that on All Saints' Day we go to the cemeteries to remember our dead, and by this memorial service for those whom we loved, keep up, even beyond life, the memory of family and home. Among the dead there are some we loved, the memory of whom is infinitely dear, sons and brothers who in the full strength and tide of life made the supreme sacrifice. Yes, those whom we loved, we must love more, those who fought on the Marne, the Yser, at Verdun, on the Somme and in Champagne, those who fought on the battle-fields of France, of the Orient, of Italy, surpassing the heroes of history and legend. Everywhere did they fight in this world; on earth, in open heaven and on the seas, and they have defended the cause of right, preparing for humanity the reign of law and justice.

¶ "Among these are they who came from the other side of the ocean, arriving at the supreme moment when, overcome by the craft of the enemy, we began to weaken. Do you remember, dear fellow citizens, the terrible days of June and July last? Do you remember our sorrow and grief, not only of a people, a nation, but of a small village like ours which had already known invasion and had done its duty in four hard years? One must have lived those terrible years, only fourteen kilometres from the enemy, constantly under the menace of bombardment, to know the depth of bitterness.

¶ " During those terrible days a ray of hope came to us, the Americans arrived, full of strength and energy, and with their presence our courage was renewed. We saw the Americans fight near here around Chateau-Thierry, and we saw their strength at the Belleau Woods, which stopped the advance of the enemy. It was through the arrest of this advance that our village is still standing, my dear fellow citizens. You must remember that and tell that to your children, repeating it so often that they will in turn repeat it to their children.

¶ " Twelve of these brave Americans who fought so nobly at the Belleau Woods are buried in our soil, these here in line, as if on parade; in La Ferté there are 313, and in this region there are 6,000.

¶ " Ladies of the American Hospital, when you write to your families and to your friends, tell them your soldiers are sacred to us, and their graves are cared for like those of our own children, tell them that when the flower season is here this cemetery is transformed into a garden, and every Sunday, mothers with their daughters come and pray over the graves, thinking of those who lie far from their own country.

¶ " Ladies of the American Hospital, completing the work of our soldiers, you have come into our region, so cruelly tried, to put the science of your medicine at the service of our people; you have,

with the power of organization and rapidity which is characteristic of your race, made an admirable work of love and devotion which we will never forget.

¶ " In the name of the people of our village, and also in the name of all the people in this region where you exercise your beneficence, I address our thanks most sincere, I give you the homage of our thoughts and gratitude.

¶ " Mesdames, my dear fellow citizens, we have arrived at the hour of decision. Fifty-two months of perseverance and effort, privations and sufferings give us today the certainty of victory. We have had the will to conquer and Victory has come. She spreads over our armies her glorious wings, she will recompense us for sacrifices. Soon the nightmare will cease, a new reign will begin. War, the supreme folly of men, accursed war, will disappear forever!

¶ "Arise, dead! The hour you awaited has come! Your sacrifice has not been in vain. Women, weep no more! Let us all be proud, our sufferings and our griefs will cease. Tomorrow will bring us victory—tomorrow will bring us peace, joy and contentment!"

THE TRAGEDY

TO some of us has been given the great privilege of witnessing the reappearance of life and aiding the growth of that life in the stricken, shattered villages of pitiful, battered Northern France. For weeks of late February and March, we had driven through silent piles of ruins, when suddenly in the various villages issuing here from a lean-to against the wall—there from a door of a cellar—were seen little puffs of smoke, evidence of the new homes of returned refugees, reminding us of the first brave flowers of spring that appear while yet the winter snows are cold upon the ground.

¶ Life had begun thus bravely again in one of these villages near Soissons, a village in the centre of which, untouched, the Saviour on the Cross looks mournfully over the valley with its indistinguishable mass of stones, where once were stately church, ancient homes and old gray walls. The *Maire* had returned, barracks had been erected for the school and several for homes. Reconstruction

everywhere was beginning, gardens had been planted and were being cared for by the returning population, tenderly and joyously, and one felt, even in the desolation, that marvellous vibration of hope, happiness and vitality that has made France in the past, and will renew her with incredible rapidity in the future. This town is fortunate in its *Maire* for he is a man of energy, unconscious paternity, above all optimism. His motto is," Look up and not down, forward and not backward." We felt only sunshine in that village on the occasion of our first dispensary visit, and rejoiced. And to this place, just as those first rays of hope were peeping over the horizon, came tragedy so awful that the poor people, accustomed to the tragic for four long years, accepted it with no outcry, simply with bowed heads and sorrowing eyes.

¶ Upon one of the hills near the village the ammunition cleared from the fields was being exploded by four Frenchmen from the village and four German prisoners from a squad, whose work it was (as dangerous a duty as any given a soldier on the field of battle). Just as the pile was completed and the fuse not yet lighted, it in some mysterious manner exploded, totally exterminating one Frenchman, and one German, killing outright and mangling horribly two Frenchmen and one German, badly wounding the remaining Frenchman. Is it just coincidence that here, as in many like accidents connected with the clearing of explosives from the fields, we tell this significant fact—two German prisoners were unharmed? Never shall be forgotten that silent group of men, women and children who stood with bowed heads near the school that day of our second visit. On the floor of the school-room lay the two poor victims, covered with sheets, a crucifix and spray of boxwood upon each, a lighted candle with a big bunch of peonies between them, and upon a bench beside them two women in black, equally immobile as the figures on the floor, the widows of the dead. It was only after the doctor, white to her very lips and struggling with emotion that almost conquered her, had put her arms around the women and in her unknown language, but understood sympathy, had tried to comfort them, that that heartbreaking calm was overcome and the tears came to their relief. Each then talked and with both it was the same. They had been so happy each to be back with her husband, from whom they had been separated for over two years, both husbands and wives having been prisoners and slaves of the Germans. They had begun life again in little barracks with nothing but their garden spot and their brave hearts. One mother had four children the other had lost hers. Their happiness had been so pitifully short! The *Maire*, a father with his people in their grief, told us that the young Frenchman whose destruction

had been so complete was only a lad of twenty, but that he had been a tower of moral strength to the community, that his desire ever since the return home of the villagers had been to be a son to each, especially to those whose own had not returned.

¶ As we stood with the *Maire* and his people we heard in the far distance the explosions from other groups of workers, and we knew that elsewhere over all this part of France, ere the land is again safe, this same scene will be repeated and repeated, and only those behind the scenes, now that the great drama is over and Peace drops the curtain, will know that bleeding France suffers on.

THE ARMISTICE

DINNER, which but a moment past had seemed almost in our midst, had vanished even beyond thought; the rain had come in torrents, night had dropped, and was spelled in deepest black; our car had given one last puff and stopped; our pocket flashes had flickered their last feeble rays; our chauffeur, with a tiny candle, had crawled in the mud under the car and demanded a string for a repair; the doctor in the dark had taken out of her shoe the needed appliance. Could anything more dismal be portrayed?

¶ Suddenly down the road in the dark came a party of young people with voices which had a note of joy such as had not been heard in France for long months, and the wonderful news passed that the Armistice had been signed. Our very car leaped forward at the words and we sped homeward hardly believing, but all the villages through which we passed were ablaze with light and filled with excited people calling to us, from the jargon of which we could catch the words, "Les Americaines."

¶ When we reached our hospital we found that the

news had preceded us, even in a mysterious way reaching our pneumonia ward where were three men seriously ill. One young lad, very near the end, discussed happily and heartily the glad news, and we hoped in vain that it might do for him what medicine could not. It meant much to us in our little centre here. A husband would be released who had been four years a prisoner; there a dear old father and mother would be no longer under German rule, and the sick daughter was content; here the mother of a seventeen year old boy would be happy, realizing she would be saved the lot of other mothers; there a nurse saw only on her chart, Alsace and Lorraine.

¶ "It was the *Americains,* the *Americains* at Chateau-Thierry," Everywhere we heard that slogan, and under the trees in our quiet chateau grounds our twelve American boys were victorious.

THE TREES OF FRANCE

AMONG the lovely memories of the sweet land of France always must remain that of her trees. The easily recognized "grand route" with its stately trees, having here and there the bunches of mistletoe, will ever bring to mind the miles of troops that passed back and forth upon it during the five years of war. As the soldiers of "la Patrie" fell, so did the trees, victims with them of shot and shell. No more pathetic sight meets the eye than these maimed blasted trunks that here and there remain along the route from Laon and Soissons, and along the Chemin des Dames. Some are mutilated but bravely trying already to cover the wounds with feeble green; many have been absolutely decapitated, and the splintered trunks show how surely the bombs struck home; and others, where no sign of injury is apparent, but from which all life has gone, tell mutely what the poison gases could accomplish.

¶ Everywhere throughout the territory occupied

by the enemy, trees, of course, were ruthlessly felled. One needs but a day's trip through the *abris* along the low hills to see to what use some were put; hundreds of rooms fitted with these rough timbers made safe and dry and livable quarters. A prisoner once described an underground saw-mill, run by electricity, where he was put to work in the Ardennes by the Germans, and to which hundreds of noble trees were transported, to be transferred into needed wood for war implements. It was said that the enemy had several such in Northern France. Perhaps this could all be called legitimate warfare upon the trees of France. At least it is what one might expect where " all is fair in war." It is another kind of slaughter that should be recorded, and for the reader to understand the anguish of the peasant over the tragedy, he must know the deep love that is in every Frenchman's heart for the " soul of the sod," to quote an old man's words. We in profligate America, where land and forest and vegetation are abundant, where life and home and opportunity are new, where we spell " discontent " no more forcefully than the Frenchman his *content,* can never know the joy and pride and satisfaction of the peasant man and woman in the tiny plot of land that to him or her means home. If that plot contains, as it usually does, a vine, the man is rich; if it gives life to a fruit tree he is the envy of his fellowmen.

¶ Three generations ago in the arrondissement of Laon, in Northern France, after much weighty discussion among the smaller farmers, and at considerable cost, because fruit trees were a luxury for the poor, a movement was started of planting small orchards, benefitting not themselves, but their children possibly, their grandchildren surely. In the district many thousand fruit trees thus began their lives, and each tree, of each owner, it can easily be imagined, was nursed as tenderly as any infant. In France there is a law which makes it obligatory to replace every tree that falls, whether it be by accident or deliberation, and this applies to private possessions as well as to those of the government. It can readily be seen that the owners of these fruit trees during the last decade have been reaping the benefits of their grandparents' forethought, and also because of the example of the forefather, each generation continues to plant trees.

¶ There came to the commune of St. Paul, Canton of Coucy le Chateau, in this arrondissement of Laon, on the twenty-fifth of February, nineteen-seventeen the Germans. The village of St. Paul aux Bois was occupied by them. It lay in the centre of the orchard district. At once the order was given for the slaughter and the soldiers in pairs with cross-cut saws began their work. The work proceeded rapidly, the trees falling in the same direction; during the three days that follow-

ed, 4,400 fruit trees were felled in that one canton. There they lay when the photographs were taken. One peasant woman was seen each morning wailing over her dead. She had nineteen trees upon her generous piece of ground and when seen cried, " My house, it can be rebuilt in ten years, but my trees, my trees have been growing since my father's father's time!" Can there have been any excuse for the deliberateness of this act? What restitution can be made to this woman, or this woman's children, and she is but one of many?

¶ Against this sad picture stands a brighter one, the perfect beauty of the Compiègne Woods, the untouched majesty of the Villers Cottarets Forest. Let no one think that he knows France, until he has felt the awesome sublimity of the woods of Villers Cottarets—God's temple it is indeed. And as one rides through it and comes suddenly upon that little British and French cemetery, the most eloquent of all France's burying places, one suddenly realizes that although the aeroplanes circled above during the battle, within the dark depths none dared to use bombs, because the trees themselves were their own protection as they kept the secret of the fight from the sky.

¶ To know what has been lost to France in the Chateau Parks, one needs to have seen these imposing parks in years past. After the Crusades, it became the fashion to make them in the form of a

cross with the wide aisles. Gradually that plan was modified until the parks resembled French cathedrals, branches forming the arches overhead; the columns, trees centuries old. Just as the Germans destroyed the cathedral at Soissons, at Noyon and other cities, so also did they destroy these cathedral parks, so also did they burn the library of Louvain. The same orders that slaughtered fruit trees, slaughtered women and children—a consistency of culture surely!