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Author: Henriette Cuvru-Magot

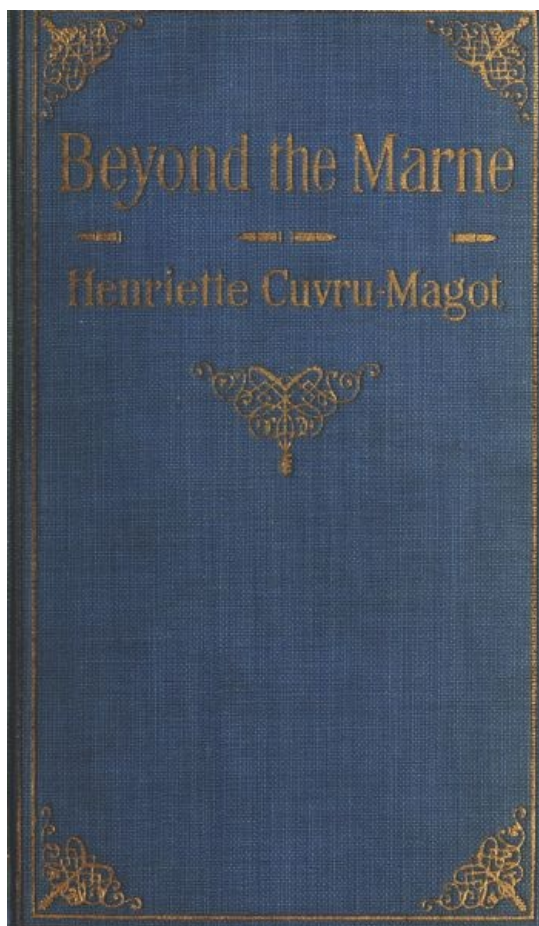
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**BEYOND THE MARNE**

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Mlle. Henriette Cuvru-Magot, from a recent portrait

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## BEYOND THE MARNE

*Quincy—Huiry—Voisins  
before and during the battle*

BY  
HENRIETTE CUVRU-MAGOT

TRANSLATED BY  
KATHARINE BABBITT

ILLUSTRATED FROM PHOTOGRAPHS



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To  
MILDRED ALDRICH

"Will you allow me, Miss Aldrich, to pay you the tribute of my admiration for the lofty courage you have shown, and to express to you my gratitude for the comfort you have given my family during these early days of September?"

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## PREFACE

[vii]

MADemoiselle HENRIETTE CUVRU-MAGOT, who, since the early months of the war, has been nursing the wounded at the Auxiliary Hospital of *l'Union des Femmes de France*, at Quincy, near Meaux, lives in the picturesque village of Voisins, a dependency of that commune.

Daughter of a superior officer who played an active and brilliant part in the war of 1870, granddaughter of a Garde-du-Corps of Louis XVI, she heard from childhood in her home many tales of valiant deeds performed by the French Army.

And now, in her turn, wishing to complete the story of the glorious past, witnessed by her father and grandfather, by the story of the heroic present, at which she herself is an onlooker, she is about to tell us what she saw from her modest cottage at the very beginning of the Great War, and trace to us a poignant picture of the events which took place under her eyes.

[viii]

Mademoiselle Cuvru-Magot began her journal August 2, 1914, thinking, of course, that she would never know the war itself except through the accounts given by our soldiers when at last they should return.

Five weeks later she was in the midst of a battle, and that, of all others, the Battle of the Marne.

The real merit of these notes—all too few, alas! since they leave off on the morrow of the Victory of the Marne—is not to be sought in the military incidents recorded by Mademoiselle Cuvru-Magot, though even these have their importance, but rather in the noble sentiments she expresses, which stand out above everything else, especially during the heart-rending hours of the invasion. In her village, cut off from the rest of the world, she finds herself almost alone with those who are most dear to her—too weak to protect them, powerless on the other hand to sacrifice herself, to give all her strength, all her sympathy to the soldiers wounded in the battle that is being waged there, a few steps from her door.

[ix]

Mademoiselle Cuvru-Magot was kind enough to let me see her manuscript, and at my earnest request has consented to publish it.

[x]

It is with interest and emotion that we read these pages marked by ardent faith and by an unfaltering trust in the eternal destiny of our country. And they are pages written by a Frenchwoman who remembers with just pride that she is the daughter and granddaughter of soldiers.

GEORGES HUSSON  
*Vice-President of the Literary and Historical  
Society of Brie*

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# BEYOND THE MARNE

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[1]

## I

[3]

2 August, 1914.

WAR is declared! Up to the last minute I would not believe it. Is such a thing still possible in this century? Alas, yes! There is no denying the facts.

Even these last few days I felt perfectly confident. We have been on the verge of war so many times before this, but the danger has always been averted by means of diplomatic parleys. I thought that in our day and generation disputes were settled in that way, without bloodshed, as a matter of course. But now! It seems to me we have just gone backward several centuries!

I did not realize the truth until a little while ago when I took my brother to the station at Esbly. He is on his way to Paris to get his mobilization orders. How I wish I were a man and could go with him! This is the first time in our lives we have ever been separated, and under what circumstances! How sad it is to think that in every town and village in France there is the same anguish of farewells.

[4]

The pealing of the tocsin is a funeral knell that strikes terror to every mother's heart.

The great grief that has stricken the earth is borne from village to village on the church bells like a single long sob.

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## II

[5]

4 August, 1914.

EVERY day some of the men about here start for the front, but it is at the Esbly station, where I have just been, that the leave-takings are the most heart-rending.

The men are very grave, but they start off without a complaint, without a murmur. And if they are courageous, the women who accompany them, understanding fully their own great duty, do not give way to their feelings for a single instant. They are determined that no tears of theirs shall make harder the task of father or husband. It is really sublime.

Huge bunches and garlands of roses are twined over the cars. Here and there is the vivid note of our national bouquet of simple wildflowers—cornflowers, daisies, and poppies, scarce at this season. In the cannon's mouth and on the gun-carriages are branches of laurel.

[6]

Inscriptions chalked on all the cars bear witness to the good morale of our troops.

On the locomotive of a return train we read:

Our souls to God,  
Our blood to our country,  
Our hearts to our women,  
Our bodies to the wicked.

How very French that is!

It is as if these trains, decked with flowers and flags, were on their way to a vast festival. When each train comes to a standstill there is an impressive moment of silence, broken by cheers as it moves off.

[7]

Although I was deeply stirred by these departures, I stayed a long time at the station, filled with admiration at the ardor with which every man answers the call of his country. It is a sight never to be forgotten.

On the way home from the station, I meet a friend whom I have known a long time, a good man who is father of a family. In order to spare his wife and children the worst of the farewells, he has insisted on going alone to the station. He asks permission to embrace me. "I have known you since you were such a little tot, Mademoiselle." Of course I consent willingly.

Highways as well as railroads are being used for transporting men and supplies. Auto-buses, delivery wagons of Paris shops—the Bon Marché, Galeries Lafayette, Printemps, still bearing their signboards and advertisements—go by on the road to Meaux, carrying munitions (at least we imagine so). They are tight shut, and, to judge by their dull rumble, heavily laden.

[8]

Just as I reach the outskirts of Quincy, I see a group of men armed with pitchforks and sticks coming down the road. Farther on, a lady with white hair is holding a Browning aimed at the sky.

What is happening?

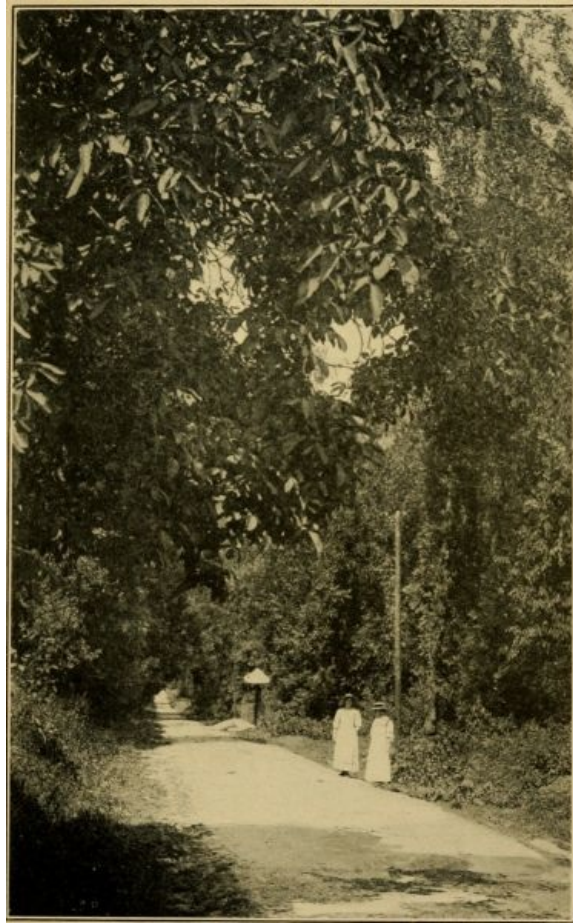
I learn that an automobile driven by Germans and flying the Red Cross flag has been signalled. The order has just come by telephone to try to stop it.

[9]

The constable is blockading the road with carts, planks, and farming implements. I immediately start back to Voisins, and urge everyone I meet to do likewise.

In the distance an automobile coming at a rapid pace from the direction of Couilly stops suddenly at the sight of the barricade. The little group of armed civilians approach.

It is too far away for me to make out anything more, but I see a second automobile, driven at top speed, slow down, and then swiftly wheel about. In my anxiety to give the alarm in Voisins, I do not notice which way it goes.



[10]

**The Mareuil Road from Voisins to the Marne,  
the ancient Pavé-des-Roizes**

At Voisins no automobile has been seen, but barricades are erected, nevertheless. While I am answering the questions people ask me about this automobile story, I suddenly notice some marks scratched on the wall of the house in front of which we are standing, at the corner of the roads to Huiry and Voisins.

The drawing looks like a map, and has an arrow beside it. It must have been made a very short time ago, and looks as if it were made with a nail or the point of a knife. The blades of grass underneath are still covered with the fine powder and plaster that fell from it.

The arrow points towards Pavé-des-Roizes, and, on studying the lines, we think someone was trying to point out the road to Couilly—Mareuil Street, the road of Champ-Madame (going from Demi-Lune to Huiry), Huiry Street, Condé Street, and once more Mareuil Street (or Pavé-des-Roizes).

[11]

We dare not say to each other what is in our minds. It occurs to one of us to follow the direction of the arrow, and, to our surprise, we find other arrows leading all the way to the Marne. What is more, they are all newly made. Some of them point in the direction of Paris, and have the word "Paris" written in large letters underneath. Was the auto to reach Meaux by going through Mareuil in case the State road was cut off? Even along the State road there were several guiding marks. On the blinds of a farmhouse just outside of Quincy is a large arrow, pointing downward towards the German colors.

[12]

We were unable to find out what became of this automobile. The first one that was stopped—thus allowing the second to escape—was that of a French general, who was doubtless obliged to give numerous proofs of his identity in the course of an hour.

[13]

**T**O-DAY our gas and water supplies were cut off! The town-crier announces that people are forbidden to circulate on the high roads between 6 P.M. and 6 A.M., and that foreigners in the commune are not to leave it under penalty of immediate arrest.

A home guard has been organized, which is to be armed and patrol the streets at night.

---

#### IV

[14]

20 August, 1914.

**T**HE efforts to find the automobile signalled on the 6th were perhaps not without success. We were told to-day that an automobile with nuns in it had been seized. A child happened to call attention to the size of the nuns' hands, and it was discovered that they were no other than two German officers. Their automobile contained a large quantity of powder.

These Germans were shot at Lagny almost immediately, I am told, but of this I am not positive, as I know it only by hearsay.

---

#### V

[15]

30 August, 1914.

**T**RAIN loads of wounded keep passing through Esbly. We all flock to the station, in the hope of bringing back good news. Alas, nothing comes but great numbers of refugees and wounded. The hospital installed in the waiting-room of the station is not large enough to care for all the wounded and provide comforts for the refugees. There are many young girls, but not enough to attend to all these unfortunates. While some of us are busy dressing wounds, others hasten to carry sandwiches and drink to the refugees on the trains, many of whom have had nothing to eat or drink for twenty hours.

[16]

Trains do not stop long enough at the station to allow the women of the Red Cross to go through all the cars. Even though it is against the rules, we reach the platform from the railroad-crossing and distribute fruit, bread, and chocolate to the children.

Our brave soldiers, for all their wounds and their weariness, look confident, and the ones we are able to approach assure us that they do not doubt our victory for a single instant. They have seen it. I can read it in their eyes.

How I long to be useful in these tragic hours! It is the duty of everyone to the full measure of his strength. No effort to help, however small, is unimportant.

[17]

Unfortunately, the hospital at Quincy is not yet completely organized, but meanwhile a branch has been fitted up at the railroad station. I am assigned to the Quincy hospital, and so am obliged to wait until it is opened.

There are moments when I could weep at not being able to do as much as I should like to relieve all this suffering—to give of my strength since I cannot give of my purse. I want to start for the hospitals near the front, but my mother absolutely forbids it.

I wrote to Bishop Marbeau asking to be allowed to work in one of his hospitals. He answers that Meaux has no hospital as yet, but that he will let me know in case there is any way I can be of use. He sends with his letter several packages containing warm clothing and various useful articles for needy soldiers of the neighborhood. I am deeply touched.

[18]

Quincy possesses a dispensary installed by Madame Bruneau, mistress of the château. This dispensary, directed by a Sister of Mercy, Sister Jules, is of great service to the civilian population in time of peace. Since war was declared, it has been transformed into a hospital for wounded or sick soldiers, and the management entrusted to Madame René Benoist, wife of the mayor of the commune.

This hospital has two branches—one at Pont-aux-Dames, in the Home for Aged Actors founded by Coquelin, the other at the Esbly railroad station. From here the wounded who arrive on the trains will be taken to Quincy or Pont-aux-Dames.

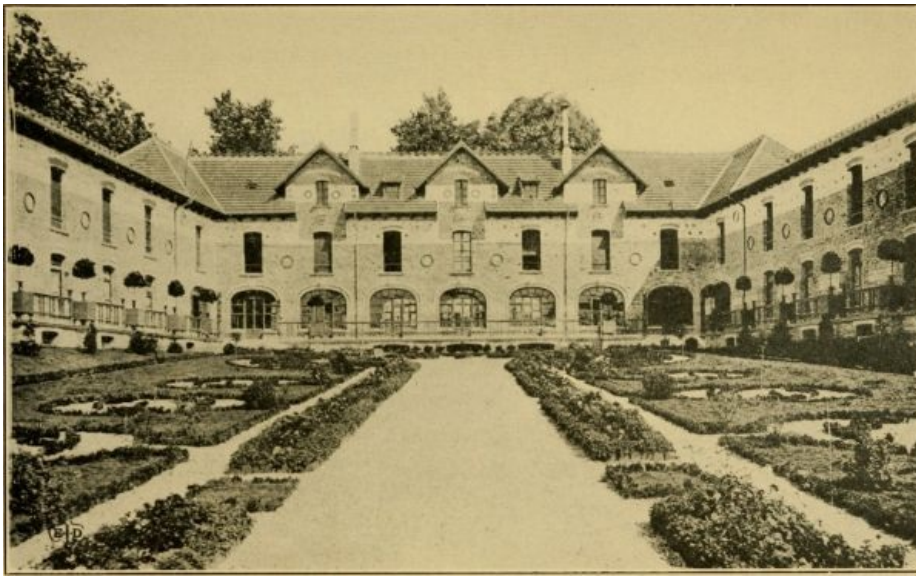
[19]

Doctor Pigornet of Crécy is in charge of the medical service.

So far no orders have been received from the Sanitary Service assigning wounded to either branch. We are obliged to wait for these orders. Each annex has its staff appointed. Quincy is not entirely fitted up. Pont-aux-Dames is organized, and the branch at the station is already at work.

Trains keep rushing to the Eastern frontier in an endless procession. The roar is incessant, especially at night, and a dismal sound it is.

[20]



**Terrace of the Actors' Home at Couilly, established by Coquelin, who died here**

Refugees in even greater numbers throng the roads. The towns on the other side of the Marne are beginning to be evacuated. It is a desolate sight.

Old people manage with difficulty to keep their balance on carts piled high with household goods and fodder. Young women walk, carrying little ones whose eyes are wide with fatigue and fright at all this commotion.

Carts follow carts, crowded close together in one long line. They come from Liège, from Namur, from our invaded regions of the North!

In the midst of all these people in vehicles and on foot, terrified cattle jostle each other. Some that were in leading have broken loose; others, still tied, cannot keep up, and let themselves be dragged along. Sheep and cows run about the fields or simply stop where they are and begin to graze.

[21]

As a result of the increasing difficulty in taking their cattle with them, peasants dispose of them for almost nothing: a cow, forty francs.

The hospital at Quincy, though it cannot be of service to the wounded, will at least, while waiting for them, have cared for the unfortunate refugees. It is distributing soup to three hundred people daily, as well as milk and other food and drink. Tired women stop there to rest a little before resuming their sad journey to the unknown.

They all have a tale of horror to tell—barbarous acts committed by the Germans in the homes these people are fleeing from—acts so terrible that it is almost impossible to believe them. One man tells us that a young boy in his family had both hands cut off by these wretches. "This child," he said, "must have been taken along this road. We started out together, but I was so tired and hungry that I stopped to rest, and got separated from the others. The Boches have destroyed everything I possessed." (I have made inquiries. People tell me they saw at the Couilly bridge a little boy of about seven with both arms wrapped in bandages.)

[22]

Supplies of food at the hospital are beginning to give out. The town-crier is sent out to make an appeal to the generosity of the citizens, and once more the kitchen is filled with food.

[23]

The town-crier, in conformance with instructions from the Prefect, orders the civil population to carry to the town hall any arms they may have in their possession. Everyone hastens to comply. In their panic, people even carry the ancient arms of their panoplies.

All day long (and for several days back as well) Boche aviators have been flying over us, and seem to be exchanging signals. They come from the direction of Meaux, circle about in large and small circles as far as Voisins, from there they dart in a straight line towards Paris, returning after rather a long flight, still in a straight line in the direction of Soissons, where we lose sight of them. We have noticed this manoeuvre several times.

[24]

I walked to Esbly this morning in company with a lad of about fifteen who has come with his mother to take refuge in Condé. He told me that, together with several friends whom they brought with them in their motor, they have been fleeing before the enemy all the way from Belgium. "We wanted to go to Compiègne," he said, "but were advised to come here instead, because there was less danger. But here, no more than elsewhere," he added, after a pause, "are we safe. We shall not stay. We leave to-morrow."

"But," I asked, "what makes you think we are in danger here?"

[25]

"Look at all those 'planes. They are Boche machines. They keep just ahead of the army. At first we did not pay any attention to them, but since then we have found out what it means. You may be sure their troops are not far behind."

I have decided to go to Paris. There I shall find out what is really happening.

At the railroad station they are not sure there will be a return train. The service may be discontinued at any moment. After considering the possibility of having to return on foot, I start out. Come what may, I must see my family in Paris.

The trains are crammed with people and stacked on top of each other are bundles and boxes of all shapes and sizes. From the boxes come the whining of dogs, the screeching of birds, and the mewling of cats. It is indescribable. [26]

On the way back I have the luck to get a train which takes seven hours from Paris to Esbly, being side-tracked all along the line to make way for trains carrying wounded, war supplies, or troops on their way to or from the front.

When I get back to Voisins I am plied with questions by a number of people who are anxiously awaiting my return. I hardly dare give them the news I have brought.

I went to the Bank of France to see my uncle. He advises us to stay where we are,—this in spite of the fact that the government is being moved to Bordeaux next Thursday. The Bank is preparing to leave at the same time. The courtyard of the Bank is full of automobiles and railroad delivery wagons, which, after being loaded hastily, start out in every direction. [27]

This news throws everyone into a panic.

English heavy artillery arrived to-day. It came by way of Esbly, and this afternoon has been taken up to Coutevroult where the batteries are being installed. Coutevroult is on the slope opposite that of Quincy, Huiry, Voisins. The Grand-Morin flows between.

If the Germans come to Quincy, or the heights over opposite, we shall be between two fires! [28]

We were awakened last night by the tramping and neighing of horses. The horses' hoofs seemed to have been wrapped in something. The sound was muffled.

My mother and I called to each other: "It is the Boches." Did they hear us? The windows of our bedroom open on the street. At any rate, the pace quickened, and finally died away in the direction of the ford—a road leading to the Aulnois woods behind our house, then to Pavé-des-Roizes, communicating with the Condé woods and the banks of the Chalifert canal.

We did not get up quickly enough to find out what this expedition was that was being carried on with so much mystery. It is a great pity, for the night was clear, and it would certainly have been possible to see. [29]

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## VI

[30]

2 September, 1914.

THE King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry, commanded by Captain Simpson, arrived at the same time as the heavy artillery, and is camping at Demi-Lune. The regiment has retreated all the way from Belgium and these brave men have been fighting continually since the Battle of Mons on August 23. These are their first days of rest.

Heavy ration trucks and hospital ambulances, superbly appointed, line the road.

The soldiers are splendidly set up and perfectly equipped. Spruce, shining, freshly shaved, they are as clean and correct when they present themselves to us as if they had just stepped out of a handbox. They are very reserved in speech, and do not talk much unless we question them. Even so, we have to be careful not to put indiscreet questions. [31]

On our asking: "Where are the Germans?" "Far, far away," they answer, with a wave of the hand. They do their best to reassure us and gaily begin whistling "Tipperary."

Their coolness allays our fears.

This afternoon the detachment of Hussars stationed at Meaux marched by. People were already uneasy, and after that they were more than ever convinced that it was time to flee. This evening everyone is impatient to be off.

[32]





**Voisins-Quincy. Rue de Condé**

Esbly is already evacuated. A few Scotch troops are beginning to arrive there.

Neufmontiers, Penchard, Dammartin, all the communes in the immediate vicinity of Meaux, are evacuated. Official records of real estate, also birth, marriage, and death registers, and the municipal archives have been removed to the quarries of Mareuil, along with the arms deposited by civilians.

Departures are growing more frequent. People in Quincy are preparing to go, likewise some of the inhabitants of Voisins. The mayor and the curé have already been mobilized.

Are we alone to remain behind?

Before leaving, everyone wants to save his most treasured possessions. Mattresses, beds, old furniture—the most absurd and unlikely things—are carried from one end of the village to the other to be hidden in the underground passages which abound in Voisins and Huiry. [33]

Holes are dug to contain barrels crammed with linen and household goods. In all this extraordinary activity there is very little reason or method. People are half crazed. They even hide furniture and various other objects in the tunnels of the plaster quarries!

To abandon one's home seems like deserting a friend. And yet we shall have to consider it, for we may be forced to go. I promised my brother to see that his wife and children were removed to a place of safety in case of danger. We are none of us terrified as yet. Though I have a feeling that the battle will not come as far as this, I am doing all I can to persuade my mother to leave. It is only when I speak of the safety of the children that I succeed in shaking her determination to stay. Meanwhile, the danger does not seem imminent, and we keep putting off our departure till the morrow. [34]

At the turning of the road that leads from Demi-Lune to Voisins, on the hilltop overlooking the valley of the Marne, one of the humble dwellings of the hamlet of Huiry was transformed a few months ago into a beautiful cottage. It is two stories high, with a pointed and irregular roof, but most graceful in its whole effect. It is here that an American lady came to live in the early months of this year, hoping to pass in this solitary spot calm and peaceful days. [35]

Miss Aldrich, a woman of courageous soul and great heart, is an unspeakable consolation to the little group of women who have remained near her. Filled with the most generous sentiments, giving lavishly of her sympathy and guidance, she charms all who come in contact with her.

I go to see Miss Aldrich every day. Her conversation delights me and her qualities of mind and heart fill me with admiration. By her force of character in the tragic hours we are living through she helps us to rise above emotions that at times nearly sweep us off our feet. [36]



**Miss Mildred Aldrich, the author of "A Hilltop on the Marne" and "On the Edge of the War Zone." Riding in her cart behind her donkey, Ninette, Miss Aldrich is a familiar figure in the country-side round about "La Creste," her "house on the hilltop."**

If a bit of good news reaches her, I am sure to see her come hurrying down the hill towards our house to talk over with us what she has just learned.

She is truly French at heart, and knows just what to say to make us feel the same confidence she feels herself. If, before she came, we were beginning to waver, we discover after she has been here that we are once more strong and brave.

Will you allow me, Miss Aldrich, to pay you the tribute of my admiration for the lofty courage you have shown, and to express to you my gratitude for the comfort you have given my family during these early days of September? [37]

We learned from Captain Simpson at Miss Aldrich's that German patrols had crossed the Marne in advance of the English. English aviators have seen them. Can it be that the horses we have been hearing for several nights back belong to these patrols?

The soldiers of the King's Own Yorkshire Regiment mount guard until 6 P.M. in Voisins and also along the canal that joins the Marne to the Morin. At that time Captain Simpson suddenly receives marching orders and starts off at once in the direction of Crécy. The Yorkshiremen are promptly replaced by a regiment of Bedfordshire Light Infantry.

General French and the English General Staff are at Villeneuve-le-Comte, it is said. Motorcycle messengers maintain communications between the various English corps that surround us. [38]

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## VII

[39]

3 September, 1914.  
**S**EVERAL days ago the hospitals near Meaux received orders to evacuate their wounded and equipment to Orléans. The last train-loads of wounded are to pass through Esbly to-day. So, in spite of our reluctance to leave, we shall have to make up our minds to it.

This morning, Madame Benoist told us of these orders, and urged us to leave, and, for the sake of the children, as quickly as possible. The Germans are advancing rapidly. They are at Saint-Souplets, she tells us. She kindly offers us a horse and carriage, saying that it is almost out of the question to take the train. [40]

The trains crawl along at a snail's pace, gathering up everyone in their path. Refugees wait all along the track, and at the stations are jammed together pell-mell in the midst of all sorts of

luggage and supplies.

The station at Esbly is to be closed and the hospital moved away.

We accept Madame Benoist's offer with gratitude, for we must make sure that the children are safe.

So we pack up hastily and load the carriage, which we have no small difficulty in finding, as it is haled in every direction by people who are trying to escape. Everyone is getting more and more distracted.

We start out without locking up anything, or even so much as closing the doors. We can't help feeling that we shall not go very far. [41]

Before being bestowed on us, the horse has already made several trips and carried heavy loads. He is fagged out. After going a few steps, he falls on his knees. We manage to get him up. Will he start off again? Certainly not. He plants his feet firmly on the ground and puts up a most lively resistance. We can't make him budge an inch.

The English are blowing up, one by one, all the bridges around us, so as to cut off the advance of the Germans. After each explosion we begin to dread the next one. They shake the house and make the furniture slide around. The people living near these bridges all had to leave; the inhabitants of Condé are taking refuge on our plateau, where they can watch at a safe distance the masses of stone hurled violently into the air by the explosions. [42]



**The junction of the Marne and the Canal de Chalifert, between Lagny and Esbly; the point nearest to Paris where bridges were destroyed during the Battle of the Marne**

The Couilly bridge is as yet only mined. The English will not blow it up until they have crossed to the other side, in case they are obliged to retreat.

Captain Simpson said that General Joffre's orders are to make a final stand at the Marne. His orders are explicit on this point. If our troops are forced back over the Marne, they will fall back to the Morin, but the enemy will not come that far, he adds.

This morning the English artillery placed batteries at the bottom and top of Justice Hill, commanding the town of Meaux. From the road-maker's cabin where they have established an observation post, likewise from the roof of an isolated house on the top of the hill, they sweep the plain and direct movements of troops. Road-maker Duchesne is invited by the English to look through their field-glasses, and as the weather is very clear, he sees the Germans arrive in close formation and in great numbers beyond Lizy, marching towards La Ferté-sous-Jouarre. [43]

Artillery and infantry are on the move. Some of the troops have halted and are camping. At this moment a loud booming of cannon is heard in the direction of May-en-Multien, Acy. But Duchesne cannot make out anything in that quarter, as it is in a valley cut off by the heights of Monthyon and Penchard. [44]

In the direction of Trilbardou Chauconin, Neufmontiers, Penchard, he sees French troops coming up and taking positions.

Presently, at two o'clock, the artillery receives orders to start for the forest of Le Mans, in an attempt to check the Germans who are coming down the hill and advancing towards the forest. The German troops seen near Lizy are marching at this moment upon Mary, Germigny-l'Evêque, Saint-Jean-les-deux-Jumeaux, Montceaux, Villemareuil, Pierrelevée, on the way to Coulommiers. [45]

English engineers continue to blow up bridges. Between three and four o'clock they blow up the bridges of Trilport, the railroad bridge, that of the State road, and likewise that between Moulins and Meaux.

The Cornillon bridge, over the canal, is mined.

The last inhabitants have left Meaux; they went by on the road at the same time as a detachment of infantry, falling back before the enemy.

As they go along they shout to us: "They have blown up the bridges behind us. The Germans are already at Trilport!"

"But," asks a woman, "isn't there any way of stopping them?"

[46]

A lieutenant who heard her question answers: "You might as well try to stop the waters of the sea. They pour in from everywhere—from every highway and byway and back-alley—a regular tidal wave. Unless some miracle happens they will be here by to-night."

It is impossible, even if we wished it, to leave by way of Esbly. There are no more trains! Impossible to leave on foot—the roads are choked with troops and supplies. Moreover, all the bridges are destroyed, the bridge of Lagny along with the rest. So we shall stay. God be merciful to us!

There is no more mail—not the slightest communication with the outside. We are completely cut off from the rest of the world.

[47]

The new English General Staff has taken up headquarters at the château of Quincy. The English are camping along State road number 36, between Quincy and Voisins.

The roar of the cannon is coming nearer and nearer. The sound electrifies me. I cannot keep still, but go back and forth from Quincy to Esbly to get news, and more especially to try to send news to my brother. I seem to be the only human being on the roads.

What a feeling of sadness it gives one to go through these empty villages. Every house is like a tomb. But those who have gone did not take away everything. Their hearts and souls remain behind, keeping watch over all that memory holds dear.

[48]

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## VIII

[49]

4 September, 1914.

THE booming of cannon is still very near.

Scarcely anyone is left in the neighborhood. The butcher has gone. Fortunately, the baker is staying, and as long as the flour holds out we shall have bread.

If this state of isolation lasts long, it is proposed to kill and divide up the pet horse to feed those who are still here. Poor beast! I hope we shall not come to that pass. I feel a sort of gratitude to him.

The few people still remaining in Quincy and Voisins seem to make one big family. We live almost in common. The town-crier, Marin, with the help of Pron, the road-maker, kill and distribute an ox that was left behind by a refugee. Mirat, the carpenter, goes a long distance now and again to get provisions of some kind, and so renders us a very great service. Everyone is doing something to help everyone else,—holding his neighbor by the hand, as it were.

[50]

But we must try to find some sort of shelter, in case, owing to our position, we should be exposed to a bombardment.

Near by are deep spacious wine-cellars, which with their massive arches look like vast cloisters. We prepare provisions and carry them to these cellars, so that we can take refuge there if need be.

[51]

One of my aunts said she knew a very safe place where we could go if for any reason we were obliged to leave both the house and the cellar. It is one of the most isolated nooks in the plaster quarries, and is in the form of a trench. It would be impossible to find us there.

But we shall have to give up that "very safe place." My aunt came in a little while ago much excited. She has discovered that her hiding-place is inhabited! And by whom? By the Boches themselves! She saw their heads emerging from this kind of trench. They had carefully covered their shining helmets with grass. There were ten or more of them, and several cavalymen farther on.

[52]



**Route national from Couilly to the Demi-Lune, a hard, straight hill, over a mile and a quarter long**

Perhaps it would be prudent to bury some of our things. I ask one of our old friends to help me dig a hole in the garden. We have planned to dig it this evening.

Meanwhile, I go to the hospital at Quincy, reaching there just as Sister Jules and Sister Marie are getting ready to go to Pont-aux-Dames. Sister Jules has arranged all her dressings and surgical instruments with the most painstaking care.<sup>[1]</sup>

The road is almost deserted, except for an occasional refugee who goes by on foot. The English [53] are digging trenches at Demi-Lune in Mareuil Street, near the State road. Trenches are being made also beyond the Quincy plaster quarry, near the road to Mont and at Ségy.

There is an encampment in the plain in front of the park of the château. It is meal time. With very evident pleasure the men are eating raw tomatoes. They are also taking great satisfaction in some jam that looks most appetizing. The jam comes in large cans decorated with pictures of the fruit of which it is made.

Every little while the earth trembles under our feet. We now hear cannon booming all around [54] us.

This morning I saw a man who has just been to Meaux. He tells me that as he was going along the Magny road, in a place called Pageotte, a German automobile stopped in front of the demolished bridge. An officer got out and angrily inquired of several bystanders if it was long since the bridge had been destroyed.

"Yes, yesterday," they answered.

"Then," said he, "what happened to the patrol that was ordered to go this way this morning?"

"The men swam over, together with their horses."

Not being able to cross over himself the officer ordered his chauffeur to turn back. He was [55] escorted by two soldiers carrying rifles.

This evening there is very little bread in the neighborhood. I meet a tall young Englishman looking for bread for himself and his comrades. I think there is some at home, so I tell him to follow me. When we reach the door, he refuses to come in and I have to hand him the bread through the window. We have very little left. Will the baker make more to-morrow? He carries off the bread, but is especially happy at being given some raw tomatoes. Always tomatoes! There is nothing you can give them that pleases them so much. But you have to hand them out through the window. One of the men who speaks very good French tells us they are under strict orders [56] not to go inside a house on any pretext whatsoever. And they obey implicitly.

Another man comes and asks us for a crucifix. He manages to explain to me that he is engaged to be married, that perhaps to-morrow he will be killed, and he wants to send a souvenir to his young lady. We are glad to give him one. Before he goes, he wraps up his parcel, and in return offers to forward a letter to my brother by one of their messengers.

At nightfall a platoon of English come down from Huiry to search the Aulnois woods. Germans have been seen there.

Part of the men are detailed to beat the woods while the rest with astonishing agility and suppleness lie down on the ground and crawl away to hide, either lying flat or kneeling on the edge or inside of the ditch by the road. (This road is the continuation of Huiry Street towards the Aulnois woods, and is called Cat Lane.) If the Germans are driven out of the woods they will be obliged to go along this road. [57]

Our old friend kept his promise to come to the house, and we immediately set about preparing the hiding-place for our treasures. While he was digging in the garden I heard very distinctly in the garden next door, on the other side of the wall, a dull thud that sounded like someone falling, [58] then the same noise a second time. Certainly two men had jumped over the wall into the garden.

Our friend heard it too, and motioned to me to know if he was to continue. Keeping my eye on the wall, I nodded to him to go on.

Hearing nothing more, I was tempted to go to the door in the garden wall that opens on the little woods to see if the English were continuing their search, so as to tell them to go into the garden next door. I don't know why I did not carry out this plan, unless because I was too much absorbed in putting the finishing touches to our hiding-place. It was lucky for me, possibly, for I might have found myself face to face with the Boches. The noises we heard were very likely made by two Germans jumping over the wall to escape being caught. While the English were watching for them in the road, they reached the garden from the rear, then Pavé-des-Roizes, and from there slipped away in single file in the direction of Demi-Lune. (I learned this detail from a woman who saw them.)

[59]

### FOOTNOTE:

[1] After rendering various services during the Battle of the Marne, the annex at Pont-aux-Dames had to be closed. No official order came permitting us to receive wounded there. This order did not come until January, 1915, and then solely for Quincy, which has been in operation since that date as Auxiliary Hospital Number 112, under the intelligent and devoted direction of Madame René Benoist, President of the cantonal committee of the "Union of the Women of France."

## IX

[60]

5 September, 1914.

THERE is no one left in the streets. The place is deserted. The English left this morning at three o'clock. Cannon are raging.

While we were at lunch a woman stopped before our window a moment in her flight and said to us, "From your window you must be able to see the firing of the cannon. The light can be seen from here." In fact, from the upper story we can distinguish plainly a veritable whirlwind of artillery. It is on the plain of Monthyon that the firing is the most sustained. Mingled with the roar of cannon and the rattle of machine guns we can hear men shouting and trumpets sounding the charge. They tell us it is our brave Zouaves and our Moroccan sharpshooters who are down there in the valley, while the enemy artillery is on the hills. With the naked eye we can see very plainly brown specks advancing in columns.

[61]

Shells are bursting three miles from us as the crow flies. Black and white tufts mount and spread about in the air. Under these tufts fires spring up, and farmhouses, woods, and mills burst into flames.

The fire and noise are hellish!

We have in front of us the magnificent panorama formed by the heights of Monthyon and Penchard, Chauconin, Neufmontiers; in the background, Chambry and Barcy. All these little wooded hill-tops stand out like lace-work against the clear sky. In the lowlands, on the right of the valley, is Meaux, with its cathedral towering over it; below, in the foreground, winds the Marne; between us and the river are the great trees of the Aulnois woods and our own garden.

[62]

Can it be possible that in this marvellous setting, in this peaceful countryside and radiant sunshine, men are killing each other? Each of the combatants claims God on his side. And yet, did not His messenger on earth say: "Love one another"? What have the sons of men done with Christ's doctrines of love—charity—peace?

As long as time endures, in order that ideals may live, must the earth be drenched with blood and tears?

[63]

What harvest will be garnered from all this mowing down of tender youth, cut off here before our eyes?

Oh, the crushing guilt that weighs on the instigators of such a war, and the terrible responsibility that is on their heads!

Civilization seems nothing but an empty word, that no longer has the slightest meaning. We are not, alas, ripe for universal peace. And yet, how happy nations could be if these mountains of gold that are being melted up for their destruction could be used for their well-being! Shall we ever attain to the ideal of peace? Perhaps, but before that time what suffering will be ours!

[64]

For the present, we must drive out the invaders, thrust back this cursed and ambitious people which has long been preparing for war, and reduce it to impotence. Our brave soldiers are setting at the task body and soul.

All political parties have put aside their differences and, for the sake of the common cause, are walking hand in hand.

May victory keep and strengthen this spirit! It would be the first step on the road to happiness.

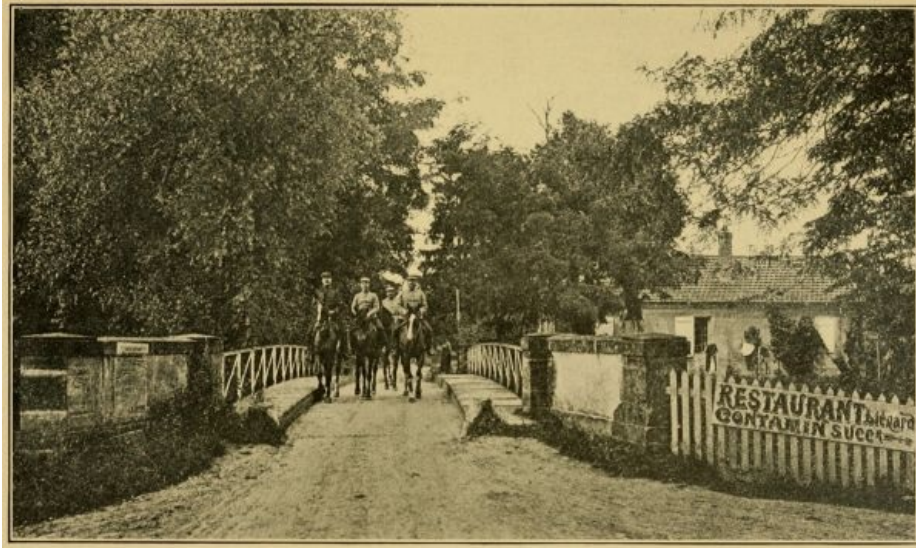
While the battle rages before us, our prayers go out to the heroes who are suffering and dying so near at hand. Each cannon-shot, as we think of the bloody trail it ploughs in its path, is like a stab in the heart.

[65]

And my thoughts are with the wounded as they try to crawl out of reach of bullets, huddling in a furrow, crouching behind a bush. Some of them with their little remaining strength write on the back of an old envelope their last farewells.

The vision of my brother rises before me. He is bleeding, near unto death. He calls for help. Every movement that he makes wrings from him a groan. By a superhuman effort, goaded on by the thought of his children and his longing to see them again, he succeeds in dragging himself to the banks of the Marne, in the hope of finding help. To assuage his fever he tries to dip his hand in the cool water. But his arm refuses to obey. His hand is rigid. No one to aid him. Shattered, weak, he lies there waiting—waiting for the help that never comes.

[66]



**The road leading away from the Château de Condé across the bridge over the Grand Morin, looking away from the château**

I am in despair. Surely there are wounded men in agony on the banks of the Marne.

If anyone would go with me, perhaps we could organize some sort of relief work. But how are we to get to the other side of the river? All the fishing boats, even the wash boat, have been sunk by the English. Can we do nothing but stand waiting here—useless—helpless?

My brother's little girls are playing peacefully at our side. Like them, we are calm. Not for a moment are we afraid. Without saying a word to each other, we seem to think the same thoughts, and we remain at our post until evening, with full confidence. But our emotion is very great.

[67]

To what merciful providence do we owe our certainty that the enemy will not reach us, and the tranquillity with which we await the end of this tragedy? I confess that I do not understand.

One by one the stars break through the veil of darkness that comes down gently upon us. Now myriads of stars are shining in the heavens.

It is eleven o'clock. Houses are in flames, and forests. Here and there in the distance campfires are burning and trench-rockets burst in showers, making the valley seem like a great fiery furnace, an ocean of flame.

[68]

How insignificant are our own troubles in the presence of these heaped up ruins, this destruction of men and things!

On the highest tree of the Aulnois woods I have just seen a little light, square in shape, which alternately appears and disappears.

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## X

[69]

6 September, 1914.

**M**Y first thought this morning was to find out what the light was that I saw last night. I recognized the tree from which it came, and discovered that several branches had been cut to make it easier to climb. At the very top an opening has been made where the light was evidently placed. The leaves just above are scorched. Underneath, a big branch, fastened across between two other branches, forms a platform. To whom can I report this discovery? There are no soldiers left in the neighborhood.

The booming of cannon kept up all night long, though it was not so loud as during the day. Before sunrise it began again in full force.

[70]

The same sights as yesterday.

The noise of the cannonade, though still very violent, seems to be shifting and going farther away. Can it be that our soldiers, after a hundred years, are going to repeat nearly in the same spot the strategy of Napoleon, who saved Paris by cutting off Blücher's army—that terrible Blücher, who likewise made his name a by-word by his vandalism? We have before us his worthy descendants—Von Kluck and Von Bülow. Nor will they break through. I feel more and more sure of it.

On our left are the army of Maunoury and the Moroccan troops; immediately behind us, the English Army under General French, and the French under General Franchet d'Espérey. [71]

To-day I saw some Uhlans! They are beginning to venture out of their hiding-places, knowing that they can do so with perfect security. I met them on the road at noon. They had just been to Couilly to get their horses shod. Their uniforms look very much like those of the English, but are more greenish in tone.

They went along at a jog-trot, with their lances under their left arm, point downward. They passed by a few yards from me, intent on examining the château. Two or three of them glanced at me indifferently.

This patrol disappeared over the hill to the right of Quincy. Others (or else the same ones) were seen during the day at Huiry, where, with their staff maps spread out before them, they inquired the name of the commune where they were, and also asked for water for their horses. [72]

This evening a patrol of the 3d Hussars is looking for them.

Several nights ago, Delautre, the store-keeper at Demi-Lune was awakened by a loud knocking at his door and on his shutters. The visitor got no answer, so he went away to the other houses in the place. Delautre, who cautiously opened the blind a crack, heard someone say: "They have all cleared out. They must have got cold feet. We shall see to-morrow."

Very early the next morning two men appeared at Delautre's house and said to him: "You were at home last night. Why didn't you answer? If we had felt like it we could have come in without knocking. We know your house. You have a back door that's easy enough to open." With that they pushed by him and walked in. [73]

One of them went on with a sneer: "Ha, so you're scared of the Boches, are you? Well, I'll give you a chance to see a few." He went out, put up his hand as if to give a signal in the direction of the château, and Delautre saw several horsemen emerge from behind the wall of the park. They came galloping up to Delautre, making their horses prance about on the grass for his special delectation. They laughed heartily at his dismay. [74]

The two civilians demanded drinks for everybody, and after exchanging a few words in German with the one who seemed to be the leader, they started down the Couilly hill, waving and nodding to the cavalry men; the latter, after watching them a minute, and waving back, galloped off towards Moulin-à-Vent, keeping along the park wall.

Delautre is terrified by this visit. One of these men is not a stranger to him. When he is questioned, he is unwilling to give other details than the ones above, saying that people would be too amazed if he let it be known who this man was. He has been entreated to tell, but he always refuses. [75]

"Don't talk to me about that patrol," Delautre<sup>[2]</sup> would say every time anyone mentioned it. "I cannot believe what I saw with my own eyes. I think of it constantly. After the war I will speak, and either that man or I will have to leave this place."

Were there several patrols?

I think so, for Monsieur Damoiseau, a citizen of Voisins, had the same adventure as my aunt, this time near the oak woods, above the Mareuil quarries. He also went there in the hope of finding a hiding-place for his family.

On the plateau (over opposite the one where my aunt went) he saw five German soldiers observing the plain of Iles, and several others watching the road to Quincy. The hill where they were stationed overlooks Voisins and Quincy on one side, and on the other the plain which a few days later was to witness the Battle of the Marne. Not knowing whether to go forward or back, Monsieur Damoiseau stood stock still. The Boche who was in command asked in perfectly good French what he was doing there. [76]





**Wounded soldiers at the hospital of Quincy. The author, with her friend Miss Mildred Aldrich by her side, stands in the back row**

"Officer," he replied, "they tell me the Germans are coming, so I am trying to find a place where my family and I can hide."

"Are you sure you aren't on a spying expedition for the English?"

"I didn't know there were any English about here."

"Well, there are. I know it whether you do or not. But where do you live?"

"In Voisins, the little village you see yonder in the valley."

"Yes, I know the place. Well, be off, and don't let me catch you around here again, or I'll shoot you."

The poor soul didn't need much urging, but took to his heels and ran home as fast as his old legs could carry him, telling his wife and daughter not to stir out of the house.

Every morning people discover that rabbits or chickens are missing. Several garden-gates have been forced open, and palings torn away. The German patrols go out at night to water their horses and get food. They have been seen several nights crossing the ford at Voisins. [77]  
[78]

This evening the battle lasted until nine o'clock.

#### **FOOTNOTE:**

[2] Delautre died suddenly eighteen months later.

## **XI**

[79]

7 September, 1914.

**A**BOUT seven o'clock this morning English scouts arrived belonging to General Snow's division. For two whole days we had been alone, almost forsaken, it seemed to us. It's joy to see those khaki uniforms once more.

They are as correct and as gentlemanly as ever, our friends the English. A young officer is kind enough to give us news, and good news, too. The Germans are beginning to fall back. Already a pontoon-bridge has been thrown across the Marne at Meaux. After trying to cross sixteen times, and sixteen times seeing their efforts of no avail, the Germans gave up the attempt to cross the river. The French General Staff has already arrived there, and Galliéni's army is advancing from Paris. [80]

All this good news fills us with joy.

From now on we shall see no more Germans.

Troops are beginning to arrive. A regiment of infantry went through Voisins this afternoon. These men have come on foot from Paris. What a fearful march! They still have several miles to go before reaching a cantonment. Some of them drag themselves along painfully, their faces streaming with perspiration, their legs tottering under their weight, staggering like drunken men. Others, with a show of cheerfulness, hum marching songs to keep up their courage, but what a monotonous sound it is! [81]

They are hot and thirsty, poor boys! They need something to drink. We go out with a pitcher of

fruit syrup and water. They are not allowed to stop, so we follow on beside them and fill their cups which they take out hastily as soon as they catch sight of us. It seems to please them and renew their courage.

My little nieces are with us. The eldest, aged three, is holding up fruit which she takes from "Gamma's ba'ket." One of the men, as if to find new strength in the touch of her fresh childish cheeks, asks if he may kiss her, saying with tears in his eyes: "I have a little girl of my own at home about her age, with light hair like hers." Several of the men kiss her as they march along, and it makes them happy.

[82]

Poor things! Will they ever see again those little ones of whom our children remind them?

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At the same moment, in a far-off home, the mother presses close to her breast her youngest born, who is asleep. The child stirs slightly. A gentle breath moves her fair curls. Do not waken, little one. Thy father kisses thee.

The mother's face is growing worn. The sister is silent. The bride-to-be is on her knees. They all have but one thought—the Absent One!

How many among those men who are marching by will see their own again?

[83]

Alas! Many of these women, these mothers, these sisters, will all their lives remain fixed in the same attitude—waiting. By force of habit, through the long years, each of them will keep her ear strained for the footsteps on the road, her eye fastened on the door, hoping against hope to see her loved one enter there.

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The State road is full of troops, marching in close formation. The ranks extend from the foot of Couilly hill as far as the eye can reach, in the direction of Meaux, along the streets of Voisins and Quincy. The 8th Division of the 4th Army Corps, the 115th, 117th, and 124th regulars, the 148th, 246th, etc., cavalry goes towards Charny.

[84]

A captain asks me to show him the road to Saint-Fiacre. While I give him the information he wants, I walk along a moment beside his horse. This movement of troops interests me.

Before leaving me, he expresses his surprise that I should be here all alone, and asks if I am not afraid.

"No," I answered, "I am not afraid. Perhaps I shall be, later. Do you think, Captain, that there is still danger? The Germans are falling back, aren't they?"

"Yes, but who can tell? Tomorrow you might see very ugly things. They are not far away yet."

"They evacuated Penchard yesterday, didn't they?"

[85]

"Yes, and they left behind them unspeakably foul traces of their Kultur."

"But, Captain, seeing all these troops here reassures me. We were two whole days without setting eyes on a soldier. That was the time to be afraid. All the troops you are bringing up will drive them back still further. And besides, Captain, if danger threatened, wouldn't these troops insure the escape of the civilians who are left?"

"If it were in their power, certainly."

"But, Captain, let me say again, I have faith in your soldiers."

"You are quite right," he said, as he shook hands with me and wished me good luck.

[86]



**Voisins-Quincy. Rue de Condé**

"For my part, Captain, I am sure good luck will go with you."

The 117th stopped at Voisins. The soldiers are billeted everywhere, but preferably in the few houses that are still inhabited.

This regiment, which made the retreat from Belgium, has just come on foot from Asnières where it had been sent to recuperate. Several of the men with bleeding and blistered feet stop me in the street to ask if I can give them socks. Unfortunately, I have none. All I can offer them is women's stockings, linen bandages, and talcum powder.

For several days Boche aviators have been reconnoitring above us. One of them was only a hundred or two feet up, directly over the heights of Huiry. We thought he was going to land. He looked like an immense bat. [87]

This evening another one came. The soldiers were just building their fires to cook dinner, when the command was passed along: "Stand close to the walls." The street, which a minute before was swarming with people is, to all appearances, empty and deserted, nothing but a single row of men on either side, standing close to the houses.

A platoon in a back street fires several times with machine guns. We watch anxiously.

"It's hit," someone shouts.

Sure enough, the 'plane gives a lurch and is certainly going to fall. [88]

It is out of control.

But this was nothing but a trick. Once out of reach, it righted itself and shot straight forward in the direction of Coulommiers, where they say the Crown Prince and his staff are stationed.

It was a great disappointment.

The soldiers go on building their fires, making little square ovens of bricks. Rations have not arrived yet. Some of the men, worn out, stretch out on the ground to wait. It is getting dark.

The sight of these haggard men, gray with dust, blowing on fires which cast fitful gleams on their wan faces, calls up visions of Dante.

And still rations do not come. The men are too tired to wait, and lie down to sleep supperless in any sheltered spot they can find. [89]

The few who are not completely exhausted make a descent on the houses that are inhabited. They fall upon our garden and clean out our larder. The salad bowl and kettles not being large enough, they season and mix a huge salad in tubs and washboilers. It is all they will have to eat this evening.

Scarcely anyone was courageous enough to wait for rations, which were delayed by the block on the roads and did not arrive until nearly ten o'clock. Not a single man gets up.

The battle lasted very late last night.

The officers went up on the plateau of Huiry to follow the artillery duel that was in progress, and they found it amazing. [90]

On one of my trips to-day I had the good luck to meet one of the few civilians. It is a man who has come from Chelles on foot. He has heard that Meaux, Crécy, Coulommiers and all the neighboring villages have been put to fire and sword. He wanted to see his people who live in this region. He had to swim across the Marne, and was obliged to go over and back several times in order to bring his clothing.

He is to return to Paris by the same route. I gave him several letters which he was kind enough to take charge of. They are not of great importance—mostly messages to my friends from whom I feel so cut off at this moment, but I want very much to set my brother's mind at rest as to the fate of his children. The thought of his anxiety makes me unhappy. [91]

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## XII

[92]

8 September, 1914.

WE were up at four this morning. The officers billeted in the house were not expecting to break camp until seven or eight o'clock, but they were suddenly roused by a messenger with orders to start at once. A hasty breakfast, and the signal for departure was given.

I run out into the wet grass of the garden to gather all the roses I can find. I hand them to the soldiers as they leave us saying: "From your mothers—from your sisters."

Tears come into their eyes, poor fellows! One of the officers takes my hand, kisses it and says: [93]

"Your reminding us of our mothers and sisters, Mademoiselle, touches us deeply. It is with much emotion that I tell you, in behalf of my comrades and my men, who are too moved to speak

for themselves, how grateful we are for the gracious vision we shall carry away with us to the battlefield with these roses."

I am afraid of breaking down, so I turn away abruptly and go to distribute fruit to the soldiers.

Several weeks later I received from the mother of one of them a letter thanking me for the kindness I had done in her name.

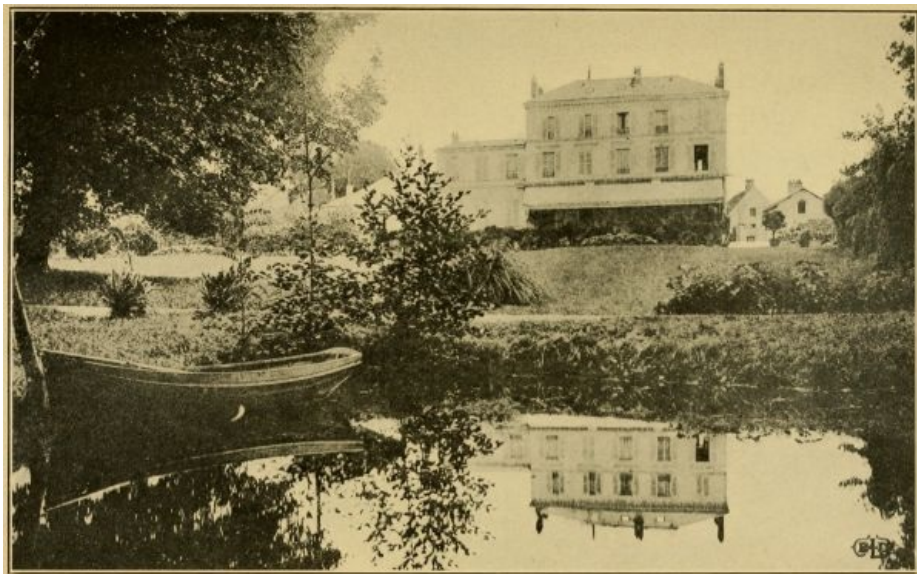
No need to thank me, Madam. In the face of the feelings that stirred me at that hour—feelings that I could not put into words—this act was small indeed. Those brave boys starting forth to face the cannon that boomed so near at hand—how could I make them understand that our prayers were with them—followed them? This poor makeshift was all I could find to let them know at this tragic moment that I longed to serve as a bond between them and their loved ones who were so far away. [94]

I could not help thinking, too, that if one of them were to fall, he would at least have this little flower with him, and so be less alone.

We were just giving the last fruit and flowers to the late-comers when one of them came to tell us he had left a side of beef in a store-room. "We haven't time to carry this meat to the wagons, so if you do not take it, it will be wasted. It would be a pity if no one used it." [95]

What shall we do with it? And to think of those hungry boys who had no supper last night!

We hardly know what to do with this enormous piece of meat. But to begin with, there's only one thing to do. My aunt and I carry it with great difficulty to a clean place and, after a fashion, cut off steaks which we broil rapidly and put between slices of bread. The men take eagerly all they can carry of these meat sandwiches and start off on a run to find their chums, who, they say, are going to have a "bully old time" eating them. [96]



**Château in the park of the Actors' Home at Couilly. It was there that the commune's first provisional hospital was set up where the English and the French were cared for after the Battle of the Marne**

Things strewn around everywhere indicate the haste of the departure.

The cannonade was very heavy again last night.

Yesterday—Monday—the battle was stationary. To-day it seems to be farther away; the firing is most intense over towards the Ourcq.

After ten o'clock this morning there was not a single shot from the enemy.

The English came down from Coutevroult this morning and have crossed the Marne.

The French cuirassiers found a few Uhlans at Bouleurs, and cleared them out.

About two o'clock this afternoon French soldiers marched past in the direction of the Ourcq. [97]

In the ambulance of the 115th regiment lay a poor boy suffering with dysentery. They could not take him farther, so he was left at Quincy, where he died a few days later in terrible agony. He is to be buried in the Quincy cemetery.

It was just as I thought. There *were* wounded men who succeeded in dragging themselves to the banks of the Marne.

Sister Jules was summoned to dress the wounds of two Moroccan sharpshooters who managed to crawl along by the river until they were opposite the village of Condé. There they were seen and picked up.

The only horse and carriage left anywhere about was sent to Pont-aux-Dames to fetch Sister Jules. She was going through deserted Couilly when a military automobile, driven by two officers, [98]

came by and stopped.

"Where are you going?" asked one of the officers in surprise.

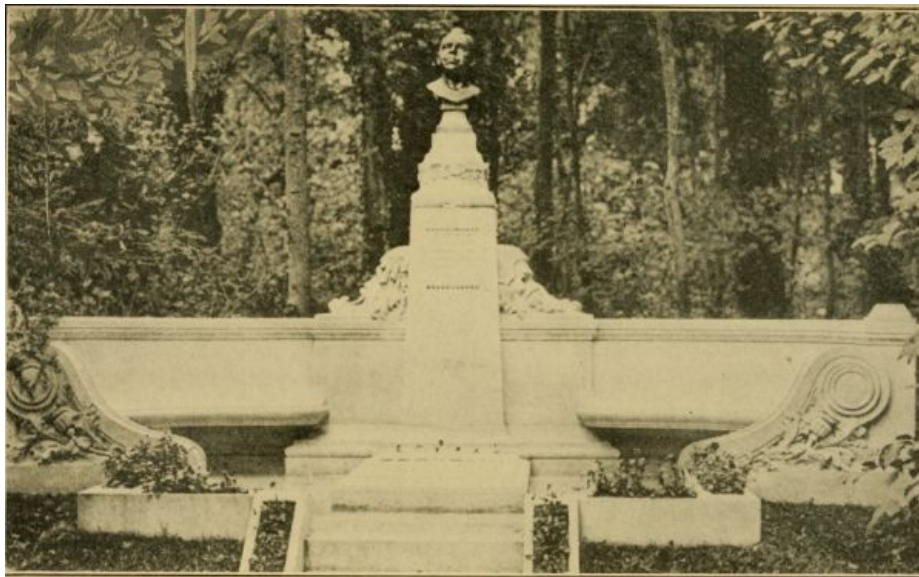
"There are wounded soldiers in Condé. I am carrying dressings for one of them and cupping-glasses for the other, who has difficulty in breathing."

"Leave your carriage, Sister, and get into our automobile. We will have you there in five minutes."

Sister Jules accepted readily, thanking Heaven for sending her the means to reach more quickly the bedside of those who needed her care. When she began working over her two wounded men, one of them showed her triumphantly a bullet he had just taken out of his foot himself! The man speaks French a little. [99]

Hussars on patrol on the hill at Montpichet have killed Bavarian soldiers, they say. A young Boche is brought to Pont-aux-Dames. He is wounded rather seriously, but he appears to be suffering more from fright than from pain. His fears do not subside until he sees the kind face of Sister Jules bending over him.

Our hospital—the annex at Pont-aux-Dames, which is only semi-official—is installed in a wing of the house of the great comedian, Coquelin, alongside the wing where aged actors have their home. Among the retired actors who are there at this moment are Messieurs Monti, Gravier, Didier, Victor Gay, Mesdames Clarence, Antonia Laurent, Marie Georges, and the director, Monsieur Hervouet. They are all presided over by their dean, Angèle Desraux, ninety-five years old, whom they call "grandmother." [100]



**Tomb of Coquelin in the park of the Actors' Home at Couilly**  
*Qu'il dorme dans ce beau jardin ses vieux comédiens le gardent.—Rostand*

All these good people were much frightened last Sunday by seeing Bavarians go by. They were in their dining-room when they saw them pass. The pointed helmets, sixteen of them, showed above the sash curtains.

After luncheon the old people were taking their walk in the park when they heard voices not far away. Behind the tomb of Coquelin, to their great amazement, they saw the Bavarians sitting on the grass eating their luncheon. Suddenly two shots interrupted this rustic meal, a signal for the rally, doubtless, and the men mounted their horses and galloped off up the hill. [101]

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## XIII

9 September, 1914.

**T**HIS morning at nine, armed boats went down the canal towards Trilport.

A French cavalry division on the way to Paris gave us news to-day of victory. The Germans have been pushed back forty-five miles!

Miss Aldrich came hurrying down the hill at the very moment I was starting to run up. With a single impulse, each rushes to share her joy with the other.

We feel as if we had just awakened from a dream. It seems to me these three days have decided the fate of France. All the glory of it belongs to those heroes whose dead bodies strew the plain. Behind this rampart we are safe. [103]

14 September, 1914.

**A**T the top of the hill, in the same spot where we watched with aching hearts the passing of the refugees, we are now watching for the inhabitants of the countryside, who are beginning to come back.



**On the banks of the Marne**

It is a soft, mellow autumn day. Everything is wrapped in a delicate veil of mist, and the sun, sifting through gently, touches the houses with a pale golden light.

Ah, but what a good and beautiful day! They are coming home!

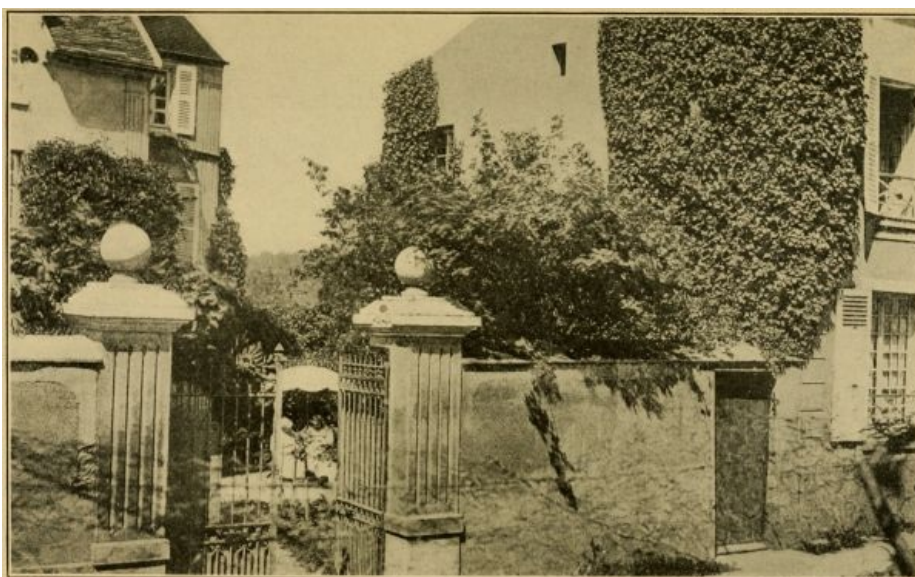
Yes, there they come, slowly, in little groups.

Several black specks at the foot of the hill! Impatiently we wait until they are near enough for us to recognize them. How different is the look in their faces, and how different their whole bearing from that of the departure! [105]

We are happy to see once more even those who were most indifferent to us. They are like members of our own family returning from a long journey.

Ah! How glad they are to catch sight of the roofs of their houses down below them in the valley!

In a few words they tell us what they have suffered. They have experienced in their wanderings all the anguish of the homeless. How dark the future looked to them, whereas now, their houses, safe from harm, full of sweet welcome, open wide their doors to receive them. [106]



**The home of Mlle. Henriette Cuvru-Magot, with the gate open, showing part of the front garden**

Their home—symbol of the native land—is still there. How could they have gone away from it? Could anything be more beautiful to their eyes than their humble dwelling—their little white house?

How clearly they understand now that love of one small corner of the earth, that love of home, which years of peaceful happiness had perhaps made dim.

Beloved spot where one has lived and loved and suffered, we have all needed this hard trial to show us how we cherish you.

So they are coming home.

And there, in the distance, where sky meets valley, our heroes lie dead.

[107]

Beautiful young heroes, flower and hope of our land, who have given their lives unflinching here, that our homes might be saved to us!

This thought pervades all the home-coming, and the gratitude of those who are returning floods forth to those who are no more.

Now the setting sun stains the sky with crimson, and forms, with bands of azure and of white, an immense standard which it spreads like a winding-sheet over those glorious heroes who have entered upon the eternal life.

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## NOTE BY THE AUTHOR

[108]

[109]

Our humble village has nothing very noteworthy, unless perhaps its magnificent situation on a hillside overlooking the Marne and the Grand-Morin, with beautiful views in every direction.

I am going to jot down here a passage which sums up the history of the commune, taken from "Excursions in the Valley of the Grand-Morin," by Monsieur Georges Husson:

"The Commune of Quincy is one of the largest of the Canton of Crécy. Built on a high plateau, it comprises the village proper, of pleasing aspect, and several hamlets: Ségy, Moulignon, Voisins, Jonchery, Huiry, Demi-Lune, etc.

"The oldest document where Quincy is mentioned is a charter dated 1257, in which King Louis IX gives permission to cultivate certain lands of the village, in return for the payment of seven measures of barley at Christmas, and nine deniers for Easter eggs.

"From the thirteenth to the fifteenth centuries, passing by the long line of over-lords, quite without interest, we find nothing remarkable in the history of Quincy. But during the Wars of the League, June 12, 1590, the village was the scene of deplorable events.

[110]

"Chevalier de Thury, Governor of Meaux, and Sieur de Saint-Paul, Governor of Brie, at the head of two thousand men, besieged the village, where intrenchments had been made. The inhabitants were forced to retreat before the besiegers; part of them took refuge in the church, and climbed up into the galleries that were pierced with loopholes. From there they attacked the Leaguers and killed fifty or more of them. The latter, exasperated, set fire to the seats in the church, and the defenders, men and women, about a hundred, were smothered.

"Meanwhile, the inhabitants of Quincy still held out, and did not yield until about midnight, after a desperate defence. They were condemned to pay a large sum of money, and the Leaguers did not take their departure until they had pillaged the unhappy village.

"In the nineteenth century, at the time of the invasion of 1814, the Allies established their headquarters at Quincy. Frederic William III, King of Prussia, passed the nights of March 28 and 29 in the New Château.

[111]

"Alexander I, Czar of Russia, spent the same two nights at the Old Château. One can still see the room in which he slept. The furniture has been carefully preserved.

"Thanks, doubtless, to their illustrious guests, the commune was spared at that time."

In the twentieth century, to-day,—September 9, 1914,—it is solely due to the valor of our soldiers that the village has not been subjected to the worst kind of horrors.

H. C.-M.

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**Transcriber's Note:** Page 9, "ont" changed to "out" (out anything more)

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