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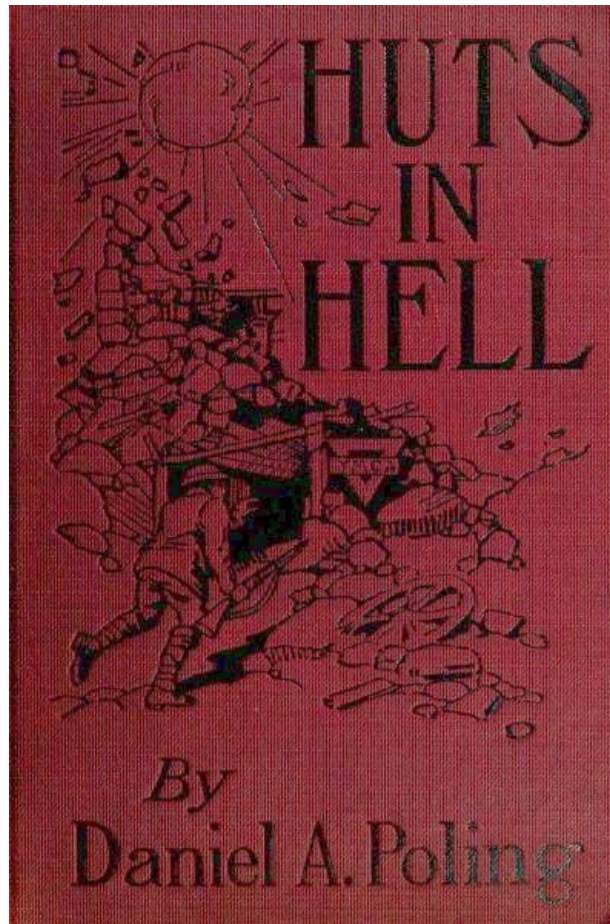
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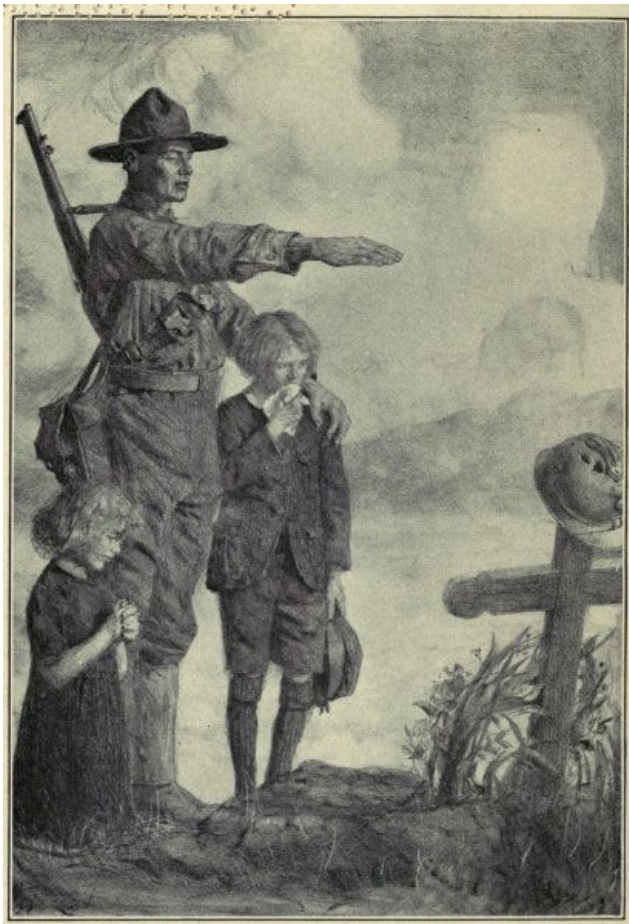
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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK HUTS IN HELL ***





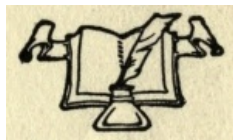
"I SWEAR TO AVENGE YOUR FATHER!"

This striking picture, which is very popular in Paris, was brought to America by the author. It shows an American soldier standing with French orphans by the grave of their father, slain in battle.

HUTS IN HELL

[i]

BY
DANIEL A. POLING



BOSTON
CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOR WORLD

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[ii]

TO
THE MEN AND WOMEN
OF
THE RED TRIANGLE

[iii]

INTRODUCTION

This book is a record of my observations in France, where I made a deliberate choice between seeing the American, French, and British fronts casually, or studying the army of the United States carefully; I decided to spend all of my time with the American soldier. I lived with him from the port of entry to the front line, and saw him under every condition of modern warfare.

Since I left him in the trenches of northern France every day has added glorious testimony to the evidence that moved me to write in one of the chapters of this book: "The American soldier is the worthy inheritor of the finest traditions of American arms, a credit to those who bore him, an honor to the nation he represents, and the last and best hope that civilization will not fail in her struggle to establish the might of right."

I have not aspired to write a complete chronicle of the American overseas army, but have tried to record faithfully what I saw of the men with the colors, and my impressions of the efficient agencies contributing to their well-being and comfort. May the message of the book be worthy of the supreme motives that have brought us as a people into this struggle for international righteousness and permanent peace.

I went to Europe as the official representative of the United Society of Christian Endeavor, as chairman of the United Committee on War Temperance Activities in the Army and Navy, as commissioner of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, and representing the National Temperance Council of America.

My observations in France were made unaccompanied by a military officer, and the way was not prepared before me. I saw things at their best and at their worst, just as they were. Before going to France I spent six weeks in England and Scotland speaking under the auspices of the Prohibition Educational Campaign.

DANIEL A. POLING.

BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS.

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HUTS IN HELL

[1]

CHAPTER I

THE PIRATE OF THE DEEP

The great liner had reached the danger zone. She drove ahead through the night with ports closed and not a signal showing. Under the stars, both fore and aft, marines watched in silence by the guns. Each man wore or had by him a life-preserver, and there was silence on the deck.

Quietly I stood by the rail, and watched the waves break into spray against the mighty vessel's bow. The phosphorescent glow bathed the sea in wondrous light all about; only the stars and the weird illumination of the waves battled with the darkness; there was no moon.

It was hard to realize that out there somewhere silent watchers waited to do us hurt, hard to grasp the stern significance of those men in uniform who crowded the staterooms, officers of the new army of democracy bound for the bleeding fields of France. It was hard to comprehend these facts of blood and iron.

"Well, old top, I'm more nervous to-night than I ever was in the air; it's a jolly true fact, I am," [2] said the British flier, who was standing by my side.

"Up there you can see them coming, but out here you just stand with your eyes closed, and wait." He was a captain and an "ace." After convalescing from a wound sufficiently to be about, he had been sent to America to serve as an instructor in one of the new aviation camps. He was returning now to re-enter the service at the front.

And it was a nerve-racking experience to wait out the night with its hidden but sure dangers. I turned in at eleven, fully dressed, and in spite of the menace that charged the very air was soon asleep. It seemed like ten minutes, or a flash,—it really was six hours,—when "Boom!" and I was awake. I sat up in bed, and tried to get my bearings. In a flash I remembered that I was at sea. Then I recalled the falling of a great stack of chairs on the deck just above our stateroom a few nights before, and was reassured. But "Boom! Boom! Boom!" three times in quick succession our six-inch guns spoke, shaking the ship from bow to stem. Before the third discharge had sounded I was in the middle of the floor.

There I met my cabin partner, the premier aviator of the American navy. We exchanged no lengthy felicitations, but jumped into our life-preservers and hurried on deck. Eight times the guns were in action in that first attack. What the results were we never learned; ships' officers are reticent, and gun-crews are not allowed to speak. [3]

On four different occasions, the last time within thirty miles of the Mersey River, we were attacked by submarines. Later, in London, I learned that ours had been one of the most eventful trips of the war—that did not end disastrously. I know now exactly what a "finger periscope" looks like at a distance of three hundred yards; one glimpse is quite enough! And at least one submarine that interviewed us went down after its interview deeper than it had ever gone before.

After the first attack, unless we happened to be on deck when an action began, we were kept below until the disturbance was over. There was little chance to observe the manœuvres of the enemy, anyhow; he was elusive and kept discreetly under cover. It was not until several hours after the first attack that our convoy appeared; until within the danger zone we had sped on our way alone, trusting to our own engines and the skill of our captain.

Then the destroyers finally picked us up, three of them; we saw the Stars and Stripes flying from their signal-masts. It was a feast to our anxious eyes. Like frisky young horses these chargers of the sea cavorted about us. The sight of them brought a comforting sense of security. [4]

The last attack came at dusk, and was beaten off with gun-fire and depth-charges, the latter dropped in the wake of the conning-tower that had scarcely got out of sight when the destroyers dashed over the spot, one from the rear and another that swept across our bows, clearing us by inches. Our own gun-crew did not relax its vigilance until the bar was crossed and all danger was passed. The officer in charge of the bluejackets was an Annapolis man and a friend of my cabin companion. He had been compelled to resign his commission because of ill health; the doctors assured him that he was incurably afflicted with tuberculosis. But the war brought him quickly back. The need was so great that he was not turned away. When I left him at Liverpool, he had been without sleep for two days and two nights; but he was happy.

"I have my big chance," he said, "and I'm getting well!" Thus does the spirit conquer the body when a crisis challenges the soul.

A few days after landing in Great Britain I saw the ruins of a fishing-ship that had been attacked by a submarine. Without warning the U-boat had appeared and begun to shell the little vessel. Though outranged, the one gun of the smack replied right sturdily. But it was an unequal and hopeless fight. Soon the fishermen were forced to take to the open boats. This they did, dragging along their wounded. They were shelled as they pulled away; and the mate, already hit, received a mortal hurt, but did not flinch.

[5]

The submarine disappeared as suddenly as it came, perhaps warned by wireless of the approach of British cruisers. Back to their little ship came the dauntless seamen. Let one of those who heard the story tell it.

"The fire was burning fiercely forward; steam was pouring from her wrecked engine-room; and the ammunition was exploding broadcast about her decks.

"'A doot she's sinkin',' said Ewing stoutly. Noble said nothing; he was not given overmuch to speech; but he made the painter fast, and proceeded to climb aboard again. Ewing followed, and between them they fought and overcame the fire.

"'Dinna leave me, Jamie!' cried the mate piteously. 'Dinna leave me in the little boat!'

"'Na, na,' was the reply; 'we'll na leave ye'; and presently they brought their wounded back on board, and took them below again. The mate was laid on his bunk, and Ewing fetched his shirts from his bag, and tore them up into bandages. 'An them's his dress shirts!' murmured Noble. It was his first and last contribution to the conversation.

"They took turn and turn about to tend the wounded, plug the shot-holes, and quench the smouldering embers of the fire, reverently dragging the wreckage from off their dead, and comforting the dying mate in the soft, almost tender accents of the Celt.

[6]

"'Tis nae guid,' said the mate at last. 'Dinna fash about me, lads. A'll gang nae mair on patrol'; and so he died." But they saved their little ship, and I saw her there in a corner of the basin, a mass of twisted metal and charred woodwork, but a flawless monument to the courage of the British fisherman in war.

We had one Sunday on the Atlantic. The evening before I sat with Tennyson and read of King Arthur and his men, the Knights of the Table Round. But even as I read, all about me was a braver picture than the words of the great singer conjured up for me, five hundred men of the new chivalry, in the uniform of my country, with faces set toward the places where Democracy battles to rescue the Holy Grail of Freedom and Justice and Peace.

On Sunday morning for an hour the ship became a house of worship. The songs of our Christian faith and the words of our Christ came to us with richer meaning. About the long tables in the main dining-room during the services sat colonels and majors and captains, lieutenants and privates, soldiers of the land and also soldiers of the sea. Never have I seen anywhere a finer company—strong faces, clear eyes and skins, sturdy bodies.

It was a group representative of every section of the United States and of virtually every profession. Here was a major from Texas who had left behind him a daily newspaper; another from Chicago, who is a famous surgeon; another from Boston, dean of a great law school. I was seated by a captain who was to solve the telephone problem for our fighting front. He is one of America's leading telephone executives; and, when I had last seen him, he was president of the Christian Endeavor union in Grand Rapids, Mich.

[7]

At the piano was a lieutenant whose name was on every lip at a great Eastern football game a year ago; and directly in front of him was a choir singer from the largest Episcopal church in Washington, D.C. There I found the professor of French in a State university. He was going back to his old home, going back with two silver bars upon each shoulder, going back beneath the Stars and Stripes.

There were West Pointers in the company, stalwart young officers only a few months from the Orient, and graduates of Annapolis, one, now the ranking aviator of the navy, a soft-voiced Southerner, who was the champion light-weight boxer of the Naval Academy.

Down well in front—and while I was speaking his eye never left mine—sat the English "flier." His cane was by his side, and on his sleeve were the gold bars that tell of wounds.

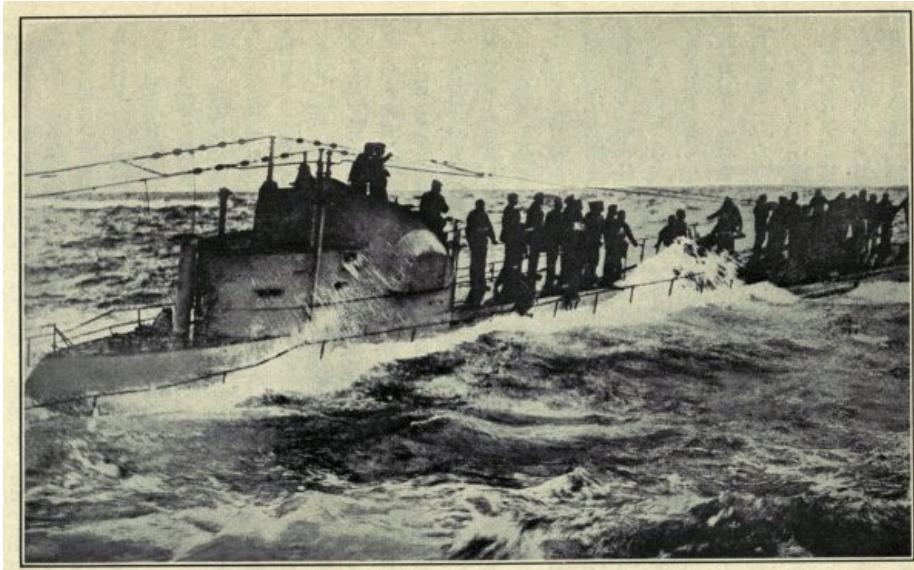
There was no false sentiment in that company, but there was a profound emotion. Practical men they were, and they were dreamers too. In their dreams that day were the faces of fair women and of little children, for "the bravest are the tenderest"; and in their dreams were the soft caresses that thrust them forth to the battles' hardness, for love has the keener goad where honor marks the path of duty.

[8]

We were on the backward track of Columbus, and those men sailing out of the New World which the far-visioning mariner first saw four hundred years ago were discoverers too. They have found themselves; they and their brothers have found their country's soul, and they go now on a spiritual adventure holier than that which brought Richard the Lion-Hearted to the walls of Jerusalem.

The shipboard meeting was arranged by the secretaries of the Y. M. C. A., and the English clergyman who conducted the formal portion of the service selected as the Scripture lesson the story of the journey of Mary with the Christ-child into Egypt and their return to Nazareth when

the danger of King Herod's wrath was passed. At first the lesson seemed a trifle unusual, a little out of place for the occasion; but now I am of the opinion that it was peculiarly fitting. Out of the tale of the babe whose weakness was stronger than hate, and whose helplessness was not despised, came to thoughtful men the memories of the sacred associations of their "yesterdays," a satisfying calm, a sober exaltation that was to their souls what food is to the body.



THE GERMAN CREW AND SUBMARINE WHICH SURRENDERED TO THE U. S. S. "FANNING"

**This is the first capture at sea of Germans by American forces, an event which will go down into history.
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These modern knights, bound on their Crusade farther than flew the imperial eagles of Rome, gathered there beneath the starry banner of their fathers and under the flag of the church with as true a consecration and as fine a faith as ever thrilled the breasts of mail-clad men when ancient knighthood was in flower. No cause since men fought to free the sepulchre of Christ, no tourney of kings, no search for a grail, has been so worthy as the cause in which these soldiers of Democracy go forth by land and sea to dare their best and all. [9]

And there were other soldiers on board, soldiers of the Red Triangle, soldiers as brave and soldiers as vital to the cause of their country as those who wear the insignia of the combatant. After the service that morning one of these slipped his arm into mine as I steadied myself against a particularly heavy sea, and said, "I've just had a great time, old man."

I knew by the eager look in his eyes that he wanted to talk about it, and so I led him over to a sheltered spot on the deck where we could be alone. The secretary was a college professor with a wife and two babies in the "States," and he had been a very nervous man all the way across the ocean; but now he was quite himself and very happy.

"I've just had a good hour with a lieutenant from S—," he continued. "He came to me in trouble. The story is the old one, one God knows we'll hear many times in the next few months. The chap is paying the price of his sin, rather the price of his ignorance, for he is just an overgrown country boy. He never saw the ocean until this ship carried him out upon it, and New York was too big and bad and attractive for him. Well, things might be worse. I helped him, and started him in the right direction; and then I said: 'Say, lad, you've got a stiff battle before you in France, stiffer than any the Germans can give you, stiffer than New York; and I know what you need. Do you want it?' and the chap looked me in the eye, and said, 'I do.' Well," the secretary continued, "we were on our knees presently, and God helped me first, and then helped him, to pray. Now Jesus Christ has another follower on this transport." [10]

There was silence between us for a moment, and then the secretary concluded: "Last night I slept with my clothes on; I suppose we all did. I listened to the steady pound of the engines, and waited, tense and anxious, for the crash of the torpedo I knew might come; and then I got a grip on myself. I said: 'What are you here for? Who sent you? Whose are you?' and I promised God to stop being a coward. I asked Him to give me a chance to make amends for the time I had lost on this voyage looking for a submarine that is not likely to come. I asked God to give me a man out of these hundreds in uniform, to give me a man for Christ." [11]

"And how quickly God has answered my prayer! Now I know why I'm here, and I have the first-fruit of my ministry."

A great thing it is to know why you are *here!* The man who has a reason for his journey, and the evidence of his decision in his own heart, has the peace that passeth understanding, and that not even U-boats can take away.

CHAPTER II

WAR CAPITALS OF THE ALLIES

The war capitals of the Allies, Paris and London, have much in common. Soldiers in many-colored uniforms, from the brilliant red and black and blue of the French headquarters to the faded, mud-caked khaki of the helmeted "Tommy" just back from the trenches; Y. M. C. A. secretaries and nurses; wounded—streets filled with battle-marked and cheerful men; women in black, who turn neither to the right nor to the left as they hurry along with eyes that search for that which they will never see again; and shouting boys.

Of course London and Paris have many other things in common, but these are at once apparent. I suppose that I mentioned the boys because there are so many of them, the little fellows, and they are so shrill of voice. They are doing so many things that the "elders" used to do and with which we have never before associated them that they are quite impressive. But London and Paris do not have a monopoly of them.

In their spirit, too, they are part of the stern and stirring time. On the sea one morning I was awakened by "Billy Buttons"—I was his christener. His "Hot water, sir," was shrill and cheery; and his smile was the map of Ireland. On this particular morning I sat up in bed and said sternly, very sternly, "Billy Buttons, what are you doing here, anyhow?" and like a shot the sturdy lad sent back the answer, "Doing my bit, sir; doing my bit." [13]

His daddy sailed the sea bringing bread to Britain until his ship went down unwarned; a brother died in France; a brother-in-law was killed in the battle of Jutland; another brother was then recovering from a wound received in a submarine attack; a sister was a nurse, but Billy seemed quite as proud, I am ashamed to say, of another sister who was an "actress"; and Billy himself, Billy of the sixteen blazing buttons, whose years entitled him to only fourteen, was "doing his bit." *Blessed Billy Buttons!*

London is massive and slow to arouse. During an air raid I saw women knitting in the basement of the hotel whither the management had tried to hurry its guests, and the trams only slightly quickened their pace. London has learned in the years of this war that "haste makes waste" and that "direct hits" from airplanes respect not even the stoutest buildings anyhow. Of course, shrapnel is a different proposition, and one is very foolish to walk abroad when the "barrage" is under way.

One day I saw an aviator "loop the loop" directly above Piccadilly Circus. He did the trick repeatedly while not more than four hundred feet above the hotel roof. Scores of people in the streets did not turn away from staring into shop windows. At another time I saw two "silver queens"; beautiful beyond words these dirigibles were when they manoeuvred in the still air above St. Paul's. For these the crowds did turn from their mundane pursuits. [14]

My first war visit to London almost convinced me that it was a city of the "woman of the cigarette," and that she had few sisters, if any, who were not victims of her habit. In the dining-room of my hotel I found literally scores of women, perhaps as many as three hundred, smoking. The young, the middle-aged, and the old, were all at it. I saw a young mother calmly blow smoke over the head of her eight-year old son, who displayed only a mild interest.

And what I saw in the hotel I witnessed in every down-town eating-place that I visited. During my entire journey across England I witnessed a wild nicotine debauch, for in every public place tobacco was king, and his throne of smoke filled everywhere. English railway-carriages are marked "smoking" or left undesignated, but nowadays (this does not apply to Scotland) every compartment is in reality a smoker. A man in uniform, particularly, wherever he finds himself, brings forth the inevitable "pill-box"; and there is none to say him nay. [15]

Out of Hull one morning I found myself chatting with a delightful company, several gentlemen and a lady; and modesty forbids my telling who was the one person who did not burn up any cigarettes! Later in the day a modest young woman, carrying every air of gentle breeding, was seated directly across from me at dinner. She smoked—languidly, but nevertheless smoked—between courses. And, by the way, one sees much more smoking in *public* among women in London than he sees in Paris.

For a man who is old-fashioned enough to prefer womanhood *à la* his wife and mother the "woman of the cigarette" is very disquieting, to say the least. But not all the women of England smoke. Only a superficial observer would take a London hotel, or London down-town dining-rooms, or any number of mere incidents, as a warrant for charging English womanhood universally with the cigarette habit. I have found the mother and wife of the average Englishman quite as simple and "unmodernized" as our own American mothers and wives. New York hotel life will perhaps approach the hotel life of London; and London, we should remember, has the whole world to contend with. Her allies and their families are doing a good deal of the smoking for which she gets the credit. [16]

Perhaps I am very old-fashioned, too, when I prefer a preacher who does not smoke; but I do. For the pastor of the church in which I find a family pew, and where I gather my sons and daughters, I continue to select a minister who knows not the weed and on whose breath the aroma of it is not found.

But in London I discovered myself often in the company of clergymen who blew rings with a deftness not acquired in a fortnight. I did not allow my own discomfort to inconvenience my brethren, however. A very distinguished divine blew tobacco smoke into my nose and eyes for an hour after dinner one evening. I suffered nearly as severely as I did later from German gas in France, but I bore the infliction meekly.

Three months before I should have denied that any man could have done for ten seconds what that man did for sixty minutes, and live to tell the story—without a lisp! But we have learned to do and tolerate a great many things since April, 1917, and many of us who refuse to learn to do *some things* appreciate fully the fact that all who have the greater good at heart, who labor for the things of first and vast importance, *must work together*.

In London my feet never tired of pressing the streets that led me to the golden shrines of history. I lost myself in Westminster Abbey and in the Tower. I stood upon London Bridge, and hours afterwards found myself humming the old, old chorus, "London Bridge is falling down, falling down, falling down." But London Bridge is not falling down. Hear the Tommies marching in the street! [17]

The low buildings of the mighty city are a surprise for the American, even though he has known of them. Not until he has walked for miles and miles by them can he realize that London is a vast community. Always he has associated cities with "sky-scrapers."

That conditions in a war capital are different from those in ordinary cities I quickly discovered when I tried to have my watch repaired. The dealer assured me that he would do his best to have it for me in four weeks! I purchased an Ingersoll; but not in London, for London was sold out! The war has drained the European nations of skilled artisans. They are making other things than watches now.

Paris is swifter on its feet than London, and one does not wait so long for his laundry. There is much politeness visible, too. A Frenchman will spend ten minutes in trying to understand what you mean to impart, simply for the chance of rendering you a service. My first battle on French soil was with a button that I desired to have a tailor sew on my coat while I lunched. Between my finger in my mouth, with which I hoped to reveal to him my gastronomic purposes, and the button in my other hand, with which I pointed to my coat, I was able to convince him at last—that I had swallowed a similar button and was looking for a doctor. He did the best that he could for me—directed me to a druggist! [18]

Paris is exquisite in the little things. She knows and values the amenities of social intercourse as no other city I have ever visited. Even the "cabbies" curse you with infinite politeness.

A striking difference between Paris and any Canadian or American city lies in the fact that even in wartime the former employs so many people that a few modern labor-saving devices would release. While the telephone and the typewriter are used, they are not common. To this day it is impossible to telephone to the Paris Gas Society, an enormous organization with several hundred branches. The company does not wish to be bothered. London is not unlike Paris in this respect. In the metropolis of the British Empire thousands of ministers and professional men and business houses do not have telephones. In Paris when your gas is in trouble you take a day off and "explain." You may finally receive the assurance that the matter will be adjusted sometime within the week. If you grumble, a clerk will smile and say, "C'est la guerre." And of course the war is much to blame for delays, but more telephones would help greatly; typewriters and carbon-paper would be more efficient than cumbersome copying-press machines, and a checkbook would release many a lad and many an elderly gentleman who now walk about paying bills with currency. [19]

But Paris is inspiring in her quiet courage and her unshaken determination. Long-range guns and air raids have left her unbroken. Indeed, they seem to have cured her of the "nerves" she was supposed to have. On the morning after a distressing night of suspense following the loss of more than a hundred lives as the result of bombs, I rode from Paris to Bordeaux. At dinner I sat opposite a very distinguished-looking gentleman. He was quite friendly, and introduced himself; he had been Master of Horse to King George of Greece, was a brigadier-general in the old Grecian army, and was of one of the most ancient families of Montenegro—le Comte de Cernowitz. After the pro-German designs of King Constantine of Greece had become established le Comte de Cernowitz took up his residence in Paris. As he left me, he casually remarked that on the previous night his house had been struck by a bomb, that the roof had been torn off, but that [20]

no one had been killed. He was going to Bordeaux to "await the repairs"!

And Paris now is always a city of surprises. Early one Monday morning I found myself drawing into a great station. The night had been a very uncomfortable one. I was in a compartment with a friend—an American captain—and two French officers. The Frenchmen were very polite, but they preferred to have the window closed. The air was very close. I would cautiously open the window, and after an interval our allies would cautiously close it! The compartment was dark, and finally I shoved a corner of my pillow under the sash, and waited. Presently down came the window on the pillow! We had a little breeze for the rest of the night, anyhow.

I had boarded the train at Rennes, and had been surprised at the close inspection the local officers had given my papers. But on alighting at Paris I was even more surprised. French and American soldiers were drawn up on both sides of the platform, and at the gate stood General Pershing and his staff. Six o'clock in the morning is early for a commanding officer to be meeting trains! I waited, and was rewarded by seeing the Secretary of War, Mr. Newton Baker, whose secret journey to Europe and the western front was one of the unusual military features of 1918, leave his car. [21]

Both London and Paris have a regal distinction, a distinction in common. They are the meeting-points for the going and coming armies of democracy. No double-track system is this. As they go, so they return. Here by the Seine and yonder by the Thames these knights of a new era salute each other as they pass. From Canada and Australia, from Scotland and Ireland, and from a dozen other places, some of them as far away as South Africa, the English-speaking soldiers are gathered into the welcoming arms of London and then thrust forth to be scattered along the lines of Flanders and France. And to London they come back—those who do not remain where they fell—to be welcomed tenderly and then dropped into the distant places that have never faded from their eyes in all the days of their bloody pilgrimage.

And to Paris the world sends her best, the black and white and yellow children of the Old World and the New; and Paris smiles upon them through her resplendent tears, and passes them on. Later, by way of her vast treasures of the storied past, they march again to find the track to the open sea and their "own countries."

Once I saw two armies in the selfsame street, one dirty and bedraggled and with thinned ranks, the other fresh and with the light of eager quest in its eyes. One was marching south while the other was marching north. One was from Yorkshire in old England and the other was from America. Ah, it was a sight to turn stone into tears when the tall, sinewy lads from the western hemisphere halted just where the avenue faces the Madeleine, and cheered those weary heroes marching back from hell. [22]

Paris is far behind me as I write, but the soldiers who shouted their admiration for the wounds of a thousand convalescent "Tommies" bound for "Blighty" are with me. God only knows how many of those far-called heroes will be marching down that glorious way of Paris when the battalion musters out for home. They are now where civilization has reared her altars, where democracy has found her Gethsemane. But this we all know: they will "carry on."

CHAPTER III

DOWN IN FLAMES

"The Boche is coming back," a man yelled into the entrance of the cellar. A second later I was above ground and with my head at the sky-scraper angle. There he was! Like a great homing pigeon he was streaking it for his own lines after an observation-flight far behind ours. He was high, but not high enough to hide the telltale crosses on the under side of his wings, and the churn of his engine was unmistakable.

When my eyes brought him into focus, he was at least a mile away, but in half a minute he was directly overhead. The guns were roaring all about; shrapnel bursts surrounded the pirate bird. Ah! that one broke near! For just an instant he faltered, but on he came.

I stepped into the doorway of an old shattered stone house to find cover from the falling shrapnel and stray pieces of shell. The Boche was flying as the eagle flies when his objective has anchored his eye; he turned neither to the right nor to the left. He quickly and constantly changed his elevation, however; but the batteries were doing splendidly, and that he escaped destruction is a miracle. Two minutes more, and he was out of hearing and virtually safe. [24]

There was a chorus of disgust; strong words in lurid splashes filled the air. Particularly fluent were the men when they passed comment upon the French fliers.

"Where are they?" they inquired in derision.

"Taking in the side-shows on the Milky Way!" one husky volunteers.

Another added: "Always the same story, 'No speed, no pep.' 'Dutchmen come and Dutchmen go, but we stay down forever.' They'll come along presently like blind pigs looking for an acorn."

I knew the symptoms, and spared any comment. It had been noticeable, however, that the German airmen, on our sector at least, commanded swifter scout-planes than we did. In straightaway bursts they left our French brothers at the post. At the time of this particular incident only a few Americans were flying, and these were associated with French aviators, and were using French machines.

Sure enough, two minutes more brought the "silver queens," as the boys called them, although the name "silver queen" really belongs to the great British aluminum dirigibles. There were three of them, and the sunlight flashing upon their white pinions was a gallant sight. These "queens" are hard to follow because of their color, and we kept them located by the angry buzzing of their motors—an altogether different sound from that given out by the visitor from Germany—and by the light flashing from their wings. They were like angry hornets that had been disturbed early in the morning and were now furiously looking for their tormentor. The men continued to "grouse," but their tones indicated expectancy. [25]

In the meantime all was quiet across the way, and our guns had been silent ever since the elusive foe roared out of range. The Frenchmen were circling high above us. Suddenly and with something of a shock I noticed that the circle was widening, that each new circumference was nearer the enemy's lines. Our airmen were inviting battle. They were prepared to go clear across to get it, and were challenging the foe to come out, or rather up. He was not eager. Indeed, I never saw him when he was. Perhaps his orders do not allow of the initiative that the Allies possess; but German airmen, as a class, rather than German aéroplanes, are inferior to those who so often hurl to them, without acceptance, the gage of battle.

Our little fleet was well "over" and drawing anti-aircraft fire before its invitation was acknowledged. Then up they came, five in all; and the deadly tourney was on. In spite of the odds, not an inch did the "silver queens" recede. The conflict was so far away that its fine details were lost to us; we could not distinguish the sound of the machine guns in the air from those in the front-line trenches below us, and only the sunlight flashing on the silver wings told that "our flag was still there." [26]

It was a swirling vortex of currents that held to no fixed course. The war-birds swooped and climbed; puffs of smoke and streaks of fire marked their way. A dozen times machines seemed to collide; a dozen times we saw planes plunge as if to destruction, only to right themselves and return to the fray. Out of a nose-dive one Frenchman came when so near the ground that I had closed my eyes to avoid seeing the crash. A score of times men looped the loop and "tumbled." But not an inch did those Frenchmen give! And listen to these "grouzers" now!—

"*Come back! Come back!* They'll not come back unless *five more* get up, *until something happens!* They're hungry, man! Those Frenchies eat 'em up. They haven't had a chance like this for five days." It was five days before that eighteen planes were in battle behind our lines only two miles back. In this affair two Germans were shot down without the loss of an Allied wing. "And, when they kiss the Hun good-by this morning, he'll have blisters on his mouth."

But such struggles simply cannot long endure. This one ended far more quickly than it began. With the speed of express-trains two machines drew away from the whirlpool. Their course paralleled the lines. We saw the "silver queen" on the tail of the Taube. Bitterly the German fought to outposition his rival, but his pursuer anticipated his every manœuvre. For once at least the German had no advantage in speed. They looped the loop together and almost as a double plane. In a second it was all over. As the warriors slid to the bottom of the great circle, the Frenchman poured a veritable stream of steel into his hapless enemy. A trail of smoke came away; then a ball of fire hung in the air; and then like a dead sun the crumpled skyship fell to the earth. The victor paused for a second above his triumph, and then flew to re-enforce his hard-pressed comrades. [27]

We had forgotten the other six. When we looked at them again, the six were eight or ten; at the distance from which we observed them we could not be exact. But the odds were too great even for Frenchmen, and anyway they had "dined." They were not pursued beyond our advanced trenches. The Germans did not bring themselves into the range of our batteries, although they outnumbered our fliers at least two to one. As for France, *three went over and three came back!*

I cannot describe my feelings as I saw that German die in his burning chariot, but a flying man has described them for me. He was speaking at a patriotic meeting in western New York. Very handsome he was in the uniform of the Lafayette Escadrille, and he was very young, the youngest man ever allowed to wear that uniform. Already he had been cited for bringing down three enemy planes. He was recovering from a severe wound, and while convalescing in America was giving some of his time to platform work. [28]

Again and again the men at his table (it was a dinner affair) urged him to tell of one of his battles. He was reluctant to do so. His consent was finally secured, but only after pressure that was hardly allowable had been brought to bear.

The tale was told without the slightest attempt at oratorical effect. He described his success in outmanœuvring his opponent, or rather his *two* opponents, for two men were in the enemy plane; the buckling of the German machine; the shooting of the observer from his seat, and how he hurtled through the air; the explosion and the fire. Then he said, "I stopped there in the sky, and

all that I could think was, 'Do they feel it?'"

The lad's eyes—for his face and his years were those of a lad, though he had done already a man's stern work—were wistful as he spoke. *These men are not killers.*

But it was not at the front that I found the horror of aërial warfare. One afternoon I stepped from the American Y. M. C. A. headquarters in London, at 47 Russell Square, walked a little way, and found stones red with the blood of children. When I left Europe, not a single military objective had been found by an aërial bomb in all the raids over the capital of the United Kingdom. In the very nature of things it is not likely that a bomb will reach such an objective. The night-raider must have a large target. Twenty minutes sees him across the Channel and at the estuary of the Thames. He follows the silver trail into the heart of the city, and drops his "eggs." But of course a military programme is not intended. Imperial Germany built her aërial plans about the theory that terrorizing a people will destroy a nation's morale. [29]

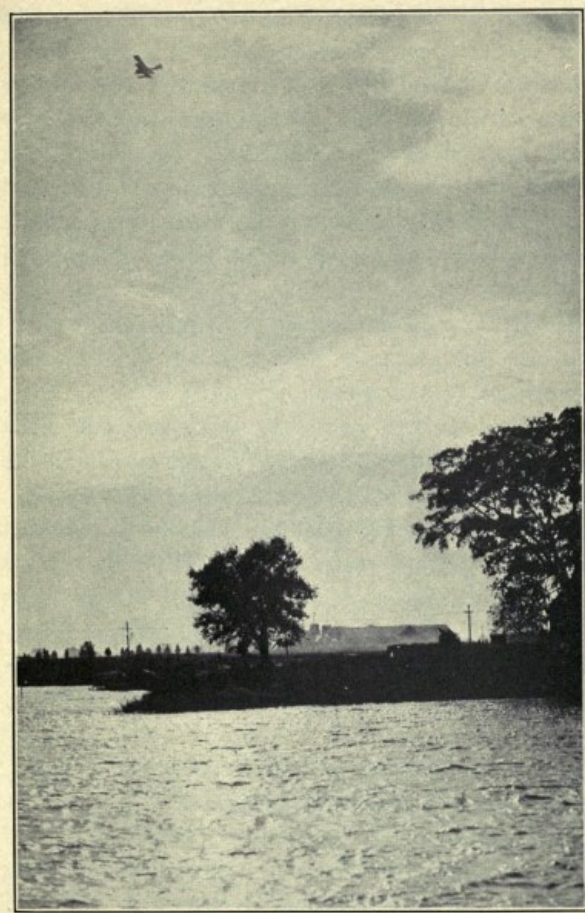
But Imperial Germany blundered again. Early one morning, following the sounding of the "all-clear" signals, a great company crowded against the ropes that the omnipresent "Bobby" had thrown about a lodging-house. Many murdered and maimed had been left behind by the Bluebeard of Berlin. A gray-haired man was lifted by the carriers. Surely he was dead; the top of his head was like a red, red poppy. But no. He raised his thin, white hand, and waved it feebly to the crowd below. Such a roar went up from that multitude as man seldom hears,—*the roar of the female lion standing over her cubs.*

One night I reached Paris simultaneously with an air-raid warning. Later I stood—very foolishly, but I was ignorant of the danger then—on the roof of the Gibraltar Hotel, and watched first the star shells and the barrage at the city's edge, the flashing of the signals from the defending planes, and the long arms of the mighty searchlights as they policed the sky. So effective were the French that night that the enemy got no farther than the suburbs. [30]

Many excruciatingly funny things happen during a raid, as for instance the raising of an umbrella by a gentleman who suddenly found shrapnel falling about him. He kept it up, too, while he galloped straight down the middle of the street instead of finding cover.

A very prominent gentleman, who is a friend of the writer, had been looking forward with some misgivings to his wartime trip abroad. He found his first night in Paris enlivened by a visit from Germany. He had made diligent inquiry and learned the exact location of the abri, had several times traversed the route between his room and the cellar, and had been particular to make himself familiar with the signals of alarm. He was restless when he first retired; but the long and wearisome journey was a sure sleep-producer, and it was out of profound slumber that the whistle and cries awoke him.

You may be sure that he lost no time in getting under headway; he even forgot his dressing-gown and the slippers by the side of his bed. He sacrificed all impedimenta for speed. I do not know whether he used the banisters or not, but I have reason to believe that nothing was left undone to cover the maximum of distance in the minimum of time. Afterwards he remembered the amazed countenances of the people in the halls as he flashed by. However, their indifference (indeed, they were not even bound in the direction of the cellar) did not deter him. What he regarded as carelessness due to long exposure and many similar experiences did not blind him to the obligations he owed to his own family and profession.



**AN AMERICAN AIRMAN RETURNING TO HIS POST AFTER A
DAY'S WORK IN THE SKIES**

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The cellar was cold, but he was no quitter! He was the only one in it, but company was not his chief concern! However, even a man of iron needs more than pajamas and bare feet to hold him steadfast through an unwarmed February night in a Paris abri. Before two hours had passed the cautious American was fully decided to risk all for warmth. He was a human iceberg when he crept up the quiet stairs and into his bed. The next morning he discovered that the signals he obeyed were the "All clear," that he had failed to hear the warning, and that he had slept through the raid. [31]

But a few weeks later the German came clear in. Again I happened to be in the Gibraltar Hotel, *in* the hotel this time. I sat in the parlor with Dr. Robert Freeman of Pasadena, a master of the intricacies of Christian service in this war. The windows were iron-shuttered, and we listened in comparative safety. The guns of the defensive batteries roared about us, and above the sound of them crashed again and again the bombs of the city's despoilers. Explosions came quite near that night. A bloody night it was for women and babies. [32]

Again I say it: there is and has been no excuse of even barbarous military science for the murder trips to London and Paris. In one abri that night, a shelter in a great station, nearly a hundred died.

Among those killed in a hospital was Miss Winona Martin of Long Island. She had been in France only a few days, having come across to serve as a Y. M. C. A. canteen worker. She was the first American Y. M. C. A. representative to die in action. "The devil loves a shining mark," but even frightfulness overshot its mark that night. Dr. Freeman conducted the funeral of the quiet woman who had travelled far to be a messenger of cheer and comfort. There was no sermon. On Miss Martin's record-card, in her own handwriting, are the words, "For the duration of the war and longer if necessary." Another has said:

"Her sacrifice spoke more eloquently than words. Longer than the duration of the war will linger the memory of the girl, the first American woman in Paris to lay down her life in this struggle against wrong, the first martyr among those wearers of the triangle who may be found living in every camp and trench of France."

CHAPTER IV
PERSHING

[33]

Persons about to be received by the great are invariably amusing; I know, for I have had the "funny feeling" of the man who waits without. A reception-room is a "first-aid station" in practical

psychology. The nonchalance, perfectly transparent and that deceives no one, not even the man who feigns it; the effort to convince the other fellow of your own importance or the importance of your mission; the anxiety and nervousness that you hide behind venerable magazines—these are a few of the symptoms of the "about-to-be-ushered-into-the-presence-of."

I had stepped over to the general headquarters from the Y. M. C. A. hut, to ascertain when "The General" would see me, and had been surprised when Colonel Boyd, his secretary, said:

"Can you wait? He will meet you this afternoon."

And so in the plain but ample room separated from General Pershing's private office by a smaller room occupied by his secretary I entertained myself for two hours while the man upon whom the nation has placed so great a responsibility wrestled with his problems. And while I waited, I studied psychology. I began with a more or less complete analysis of my own mental state—but why discuss personal matters when there are other people to talk about? [34]

I was particularly interested in a little group of Frenchmen. One of them was a general, I should judge, although uniforms and gold braid in France often mislead a civilian, and I had been saluting letter-carriers for a week before my attention was called to the mistake. He had with him two aids, one of whom was an interpreter. The French officers sat with their backs toward the entrance of the small room already referred to. Just within the entrance was a table on which were four hand-grenades, unloaded, but with their detonating-caps in place. However, the exact status of the grenades, which I have just revealed, was unknown to me until after *it* happened.

On one of the periodical excursions of my eyes about the bare walls of the room—a room overlooking a great barrack court, flanked on two sides and closed at one end by long, low gray stone buildings—they stopped with a shock at the grenades on the table. The table was directly in front of me and directly behind the French officers, who sat within ten feet of it. When my eyes were arrested in their aimless wandering, one of those hand-grenades was in the act of falling off that table. I knew nothing about the nature of grenades at the time, only that they were, potentially at least, small but effective engines of destruction. At any rate, there was nothing that I could do but brace myself against what might happen when that grenade met the floor. [35]

What happened was this: the detonating-cap exploded. It was a relatively small noise as this war goes, but within the four walls of a quiet room it gave a pretty good account of itself. It was particularly disquieting to men without warning of it, men for several years accustomed to associate all such disturbances with the business of killing. The French general and his aids rose hurriedly and with ejaculations! Every man in the two rooms decreased the distance between himself and the ceiling. Only General Pershing remained unperturbed; at least, no sound came from within and his door was not opened.

After the field had been cleared and the composure of the innocent bystanders restored, I took up again my task of waiting. Colonel Boyd was courteous and interesting; indeed, the American officer overseas as I saw him was two things—busy, *very* busy, and always courteous. He has no time to waste, but he is efficient without being a "gump." His efficiency is branded with his Americanism; water-mains, railroads, and warehouses built by Uncle Sam's engineers carry no "made in America" label, but their origin is unmistakable. They look and they *act* the part! There are French cities now that remind one of a section of Bridgeport, Conn., or of Chicago. [36]

And what romance walks with those who have come so far to make the paths straight for democracy! An Oregon company of engineers, while excavating in a certain city that nearly girdles a beautiful harbor, dug up a cache of Roman coins bearing the head of Marcus Aurelius. The tombs of the past are being opened in more ways than one by these soldiers of the present; the old and the new are joined together, and the West has come to the East.

But we have wandered far afield. In the meantime General Pershing has completed his schedule, and I am ushered into his presence. Perhaps I suggest the personality of the man when I confess that I carried away not the slightest recollection of the room in which our interview took place. He had just completed instructions to certain officers, and was dismissing them when I entered. He greeted me with the suggestion of a smile, and, after I had seated myself at his invitation and directly across the flat-top desk from him, he waited for me to speak.

When I faced General Pershing, I found a man who looks like his picture. He is slightly heavier than I had expected to find him, exceedingly well proportioned, and amply tall. He is erect without the conscious effort of those who begin soldiering after years in the undisciplined pursuits of peace. His eye is gray and clear, his close-cropped mustache accentuates the firmness of his mouth. His skin is of the ruddy texture of health, the health of vigorous action out-of-doors. I have not consulted "Who's Who in America," and I know that he is older than he appears; but he looks and acts virile fifty. His inches are all those of a soldier, and his presence carries the assurance of a man of action. [37]

In the weeks which I spent in France following my hour with the commander-in-chief of the overseas forces the almost startling efficiency that I found everywhere, and in some instances under difficult and extreme circumstances, was at once associated with him, with the personality of this other "quiet man" who has soldiered in every place where the flag of his country floats, and who is now intrusted with what Lincoln gave to Grant. General Pershing's promptness is fast becoming proverbial. On October 19, 1917, he was requested to pass judgment upon the sawed-off shot-gun as a possible weapon of trench warfare. Seventeen days later the originator of the idea was notified that the gun had been adopted.

When General Pershing spoke, his first sentence clearly stated his attitude toward the matter

being considered. It is my impression that no circumstance would find him able to cover his thoughts with words; his mind is hopelessly direct! His famous "speech" at the tomb of Lafayette, "*Lafayette, we are here,*" was true to his best form, and what could have been more complete? [38]

As to the opinion men have of him,—those who have been associated with him closely and those who have met him casually, as I did,—one word tells the whole story—*confidence*. A certain gentleman high in British political life said in my presence,

"General Pershing is a great re-assurance."

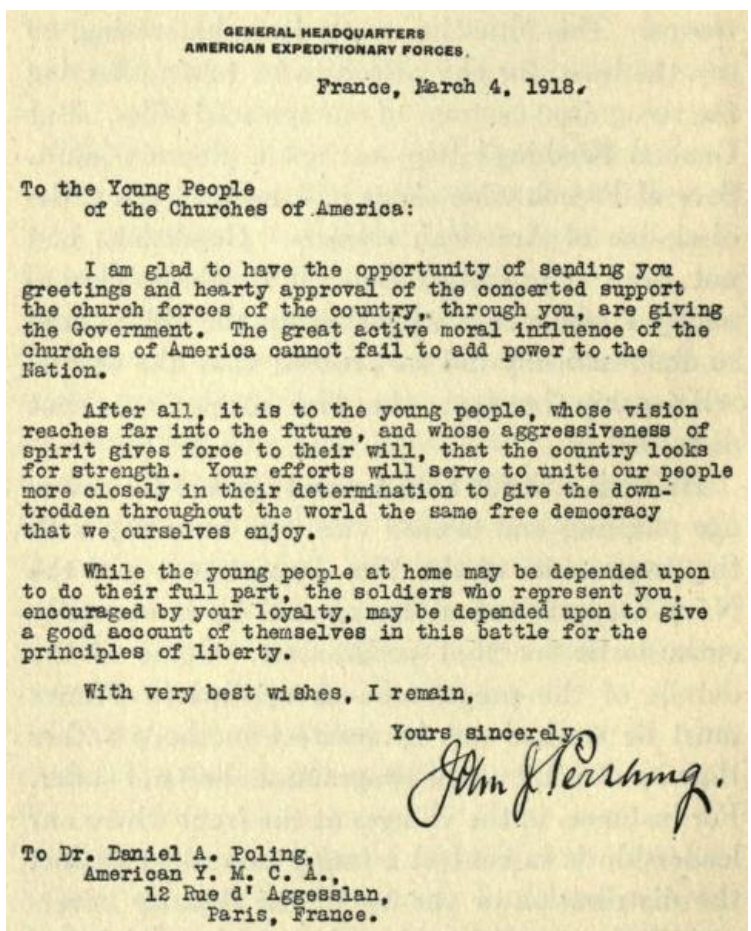
In the opinion of the writer he will be followed with enthusiasm and real affection by many, and all will have faith in his leadership.

When we discussed the morals of the soldiers in France, the General's face lighted; and well it might, for no nation has ever been represented by cleaner-living men than those who wear the uniform of the United States in France to-day; and the programme of the military authorities in France to safeguard and inform the country's fighters is a source of gratification and pride to all who believe that efficiency and morality are twin brothers. General Pershing said,

"When the report shows an increase in the venereal rate of *one thousandth of a per cent*, I learn the reason."

Army medical officers—and with two of these it was my privilege to have conferences—are constantly in the field investigating conditions that affect army morale and morals. Their findings and recommendations are the basis for orders and constructive activities that never relax their vigilance. Early one Sunday morning the General motored nearly thirty miles to a certain brigade headquarters, which while American authority was in control served both French and American troops. This situation made it embarrassing, to say the least, for any action to be taken affecting the recognized customs of our splendid allies. But General Pershing's trip was not a pleasure-jourant. Several French wine-shops had been injuring the discipline of American soldiers. Conditions had not been improving. General Pershing permanently closed every wine-shop in the village, and so diplomatically did he proceed that the cordial relationship between the two armies was not disturbed. [39]

His own attitude both toward alcohol for beverage purposes and toward vice is in harmony with the programme of the War Department and the Navy Department at home, and he is earnestly enthusiastic for that programme. Some of the details of the programme as applied in France must be worked out by indirect methods rather than by direct, but the programme shall not suffer. For instance, in the villages at the front where our leadership is in control I found no orders against the distribution or the use of the popular beverage of France, light wine; *but neither did I find any light wine*. It was not available.



[40]

A MESSAGE FROM GENERAL PERSHING TO THE YOUNG PEOPLE OF THE AMERICAN CHURCHES

GENERAL HEADQUARTERS
AMERICAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCES.

To the Young People
of the Churches of America:

I am glad to have the opportunity of sending you greetings and hearty approval of the concerted support the church forces of the country, through you, are giving the Government. The great active moral influence of the churches of America cannot fail to add power to the Nation.

After all, it is to the young people, whose vision reaches far into the future, and whose aggressiveness of spirit gives force to their will, that the country looks for strength. Your efforts will serve to unite our people more closely in their determination to give the downtrodden throughout the world the same free democracy that we ourselves enjoy.

While the young people at home may be depended upon to do their full part, the soldiers who represent you, encouraged by your loyalty, may be depended upon to give a good account of themselves in this battle for the principles of liberty.

With very best wishes, I remain,

Yours sincerely,
John J. Pershing.

To Dr. Daniel A. Poling,
American Y. M. C. A.,
12 Rue d' Aggeslan,
Paris, France.

Our conference revealed General Pershing's own firm religious convictions and his determination to give to the army a religious leadership second to the leadership of no other branch of the service. He spoke with kindling eyes of what he hoped to secure for the men through the chaplains, and referred to the work of investigation he had committed to his old friend and the friend of his family, Bishop Brent. His words were the words of a constructor and prophet, as well as the words of a forward-driving warrior. He expressed his gratitude for the Y. M. C. A. and his appreciation of the support from the religious and moral agencies at home. He barely referred to the criticisms that some temperance leaders had visited upon him after his order against "spirits" was made public and before opportunity was given for the General himself to explain the order with reference to its silence on wine and beer, also its relation to circumstances associated with army life in France. He is too busy to give attention to small things and too big to misunderstand the real heart of the anxious men and women whose sons had been intrusted to him. [41]

The last words spoken to me by this leader who represents so much of the idealism and faith of his country to-day were of the *men*. I shall not forget many things that were said in that interview, but with distinctness above everything else that was said I shall remember the dozen words with which the quiet soldier revealed his pride and his confidence in those who fight now to achieve a lasting peace.

General Pershing's life has had a great tragedy; under unspeakably sad circumstances his family—all but one boy—was destroyed in a fire while he was on duty on the Mexican border. [42]

General Pershing's wife and children were received into the church by Bishop Brent when the bishop was presiding over the Philippine diocese, and while the General was stationed in Manila. Since his acceptance of the post in France the General himself has been welcomed into the fellowship of the church by his old friend, now serving as leader of the chaplains of the American army. There is something vastly re-assuring in the manifest poise of a man who is so transparently unaffected in great decisions and whose personal example is so high a challenge to acknowledge the authority of the spiritual.

It was after office-hours when I found my way down the ancient stairway and into the courtyard. Out through the guarded gates I passed, the gates through which Napoleon marched his legions when he turned them toward Moscow, the city of their destruction. And as I thought of Bonaparte and of his programme, of that unsated ambition and pride which brought about the overthrow of the military genius no time of the past or the present has duplicated, I was glad that America's man of the hour on the field of democracy's destiny has not forgotten to place first things first; that he retains so clear a conception of relative values in so disturbed a time.

CHAPTER V

SEICHEPREY

The head-lines that told the story of the battle of Seicheprey brought me a sensation entirely apart from the thrill of anxiety and pride with which we all read of the heavy attack, the loss of ground, the desperate fighting, the recapture of the village, and the gallantry of American troops in the most extensive assault yet directed against our lines on the western front. It was the name of the village that gripped me; gripped me with the memory of things that I shall never forget, of [43]

kaleidoscopic days that were eternities of supreme emotion.

It was about Seicheprey that our first division permanently in the line, our first division to be made fully responsible for a sector on the western front, experienced its first general gas attack and its first general raids. It was here that the American soldier established in fact what in his own soul he had never doubted, his ability to meet and defeat the finest shock troops of imperial Germany, and under conditions and in an event chosen by the German command to demonstrate America's military inferiority.

There will be a thousand greater occasions for American arms in this war than that which fell on Friday, the first of March, 1918, and than those which immediately preceded and followed it. But in the chronicles of this conflict those days will remain as the days which first sent back from the flaming front to every officer and every man in the ranks the triumphant message, "We have met the enemy, and they are ours." [44]

It was the moment when the American army was baptized by fire into the sacrificial comradeship of democracy's international Calvary.

The village nestles among the hills in the shadow of Mount Sec, Mount Sec before which and on which so many thousands of gallant Frenchmen have laid down their lives, and within which now mass the German batteries that overlook the immediate plain where our forces lie intrenched. It rests, or did rest, well within our first line, a kilometer beyond the last battery of "75's," and at the same distance from the great camouflaged military road that the papers have announced was the objective of the recent attack. One catches occasional glimpses of it as he approaches it through the deep connecting trench, a picture of desolation framed with crumbling walls. From it the trenches lead on again, but not far, for Seicheprey is close to the German barbed wire. The officers and the men who hold it are constantly on the alert. German guns always command it, and perhaps a dozen times a day drop shells into it. No men are billeted there beyond the capacity of the bomb-proofs. These shelters, aside from the direct hits of high-power shells, give practically complete protection. [45]

There are no villagers in Seicheprey; those who lived there and who tilled the fields round about are gone. It is a community without a woman, and from morning until night it does not hear the small voice of a child. It is a city of ruin, a place of most melancholy memories.

Seicheprey is holy ground; lying midway between Toul and Metz, it is in the heart of the salient that next to Verdun has witnessed the bloodiest fighting on the French front. It is an honor and a high trust for an army just to be there. It stands before one of the two gateways to the heart of France. It has seen the tide of war surge back and forth many times among its houses and up and down its street. Again and again it has been captured and surrendered and recaptured.

Out from it, or hard by, twenty thousand glorious Frenchmen have been buried by the hands of their comrades or the shells of their foe. I have seen the war planes high above it, German planes with shrapnel bursts about them, hurrying home from observation-trips behind our lines, and the silver planes of France in hot pursuit. From a blackened hill behind it I saw an air duel above the German lines, and a German flyer brought down in smoke and flames. I have seen our wounded carried out from it, German wounded brought into it; and stumbling through its single street I have watched the passing of our first prisoners of war. From it I have watched the chill winds of February driving through the shredded orchard trees on the hillside that dips into the open field where the poison gas has found so many victims and where it lies in ambush in the noisome shell-holes. Beyond the field is what was once a forest; the shattered tree-trunks now remind one of the broken columns in a cemetery. [46]

I have seen Seicheprey under a barrage. Crouching in an abandoned trench by the side of a runner from battalion headquarters, to which we were returning and scarce one hundred yards away, I witnessed through terror-widened eyes that most appalling sight of modern warfare. Once I looked down from the summit of the Canadian Rockies upon a cloudburst in the Bow River Valley. Once in Oregon among the dunes of the Columbia I turned my pony's head away from an approaching storm, and flung myself headlong upon my face while with the sound of a hundred mountain torrents and in inky darkness the swirling tempest of sand swept over me. But this was a cloudburst of steel, an avalanche of iron; the pouring upward of the earth in sudden geysers, choked with trees and rocks and the fragments of houses; a continuous, mighty thunder in which were mingled the throaty roar of multiple discharges, the moan of the shells through the air, and the shock of the explosions at contact with the objective. It was an overwhelming noise filling all spaces. [47]

Seicheprey! It was then a jagged scar. It must be now, after this fresh surge of the human flood, an open wound. There I saw heaven touch hell. There I beheld the soldiers of my country writing a new page in the book of her glory.

Seicheprey taught me the sacredness of comradeship. From a parapet near by one early afternoon I looked across the intervening 170 yards to the German lines. The snow was falling. Strangely out of place in No Man's Land were scores of crosses marking the graves of French soldiers. When the crosses were placed there, they were behind the men who reared them, but after the final adjustment of the lines they were found between the hostile trenches. Peaceful and white was the battle graveyard. Now the men who made it and who tended it for so many weary months are gone. Soldiers in khaki fill the trenches behind it, and the dugouts echo the words of an unknown tongue; but in another springtime, when the flowers bloom redder because of their long, rich watering, in the dark night the hands of the stealthy American patrol will straighten the crosses as tenderly as would the hands that put them there.

Seicheprey! I found a French gas-mask out from Seicheprey. It has sacred ground upon it, the soil of France. And where the face of its wearer pressed into it there are blood-spots. During the raid on the first of March our allies came down from the right, and dropped in behind our lines at a distance of five hundred yards. There in the open they lay, a reserve against a possible breaking through of the enemy. The enemy did not break through; but there a few hours later, after the raiders had been hurled back, terribly punished, I found this mask. I shall keep it as a token of the unity of free peoples which in the providence of God and in His time will make the world safe for democracy.

[48]

I shall hope that in the great peace I may lead my children down the street of Seicheprey restored and tell of the glory that I saw there.

CHAPTER VI

A DUGOUT DIARY

[49]

On Monday morning, February 25, I opened my eyes in the great bedchamber of the Archbishop's house in Toul, hard by the cathedral. Rather, it had been the Archbishop's house, and even now the underground entrance leading to the cathedral was in use. It was no longer an entrance, however, but an "abri" or anti-aircraft shelter for the secretaries and guests of the Y. M. C. A. officers' hotel which, following the removal of a French general, occupied the fine old building.

I opened my eyes slowly, reluctantly, and tried to close them again without disturbing the knocking at the door! It was no use; the secretary was determined, and I surrendered. Out through the writing-room, where above the mantelpiece were embossed the seals of the cities of the old diocese,—among them those of Nancy and Toul,—in less than ten minutes I walked, ready for breakfast and a trip to the line.

I was to spend three days in a wine-cellar Y. M. C. A. canteen, "close up," as a relief for "Heints," a strong-bodied, big-hearted young Methodist preacher, a "Northwestern" man of football fame, who for several weeks had been on the toughest job of the division without a rest or a chance to clean up. His was a "one man's stand"; there was no room to "sleep" an assistant.

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West drove me in. After making several calls to drop men at the huts *en route* we reached Mandras, where we left the car. Machines were not allowed to go farther than this point until night. We were now only a mile from the military road that marked the back of the first line. It was a beautiful morning and comparatively quiet. Shells came over regularly, and our guns were not idle; but nothing broke within half a mile of us. As we hiked up the road and swung around "Dead Man's Curve," we discussed the evangelization of the world! We reached Boumont, just a mile from Mandras, and hurried through its tumbled buildings to Rambecourt. An hour served to cover the two miles to our destination. The going was muddy, but the footing beneath the surface slime was firm.

Heints protested at first; but "orders is orders," and he threw his things hurriedly together and accompanied West back to the car. I was soon to feel the wrath of his friends. Officers and privates all swore by him. Only my assurance that he was gone temporarily and to get a bath and fresh *insect-powder* saved the situation. I immediately got into action behind the counter. A lieutenant just in from the trenches intrusted to me a German stick grenade—a grenade attached to a wooden handle about twenty inches long, that he had promised my friend. He said:

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"It's safe now. I fixed it; only don't get it near the fire." I put the fire out.

For several hours during the middle of the day I had the assistance of a secretary from an adjoining hut. His presence gave the man in charge a chance to stretch his limbs in the open and go to the company kitchen for "chow." While the dimensions of the canteen were not more than twenty feet by fifteen, it was a busy and crowded place. From early morning until late at night men filled it; indeed, they stood generally in a long queue reaching up the entrance stairway and out into the old open court. My sales in three days and two nights totalled nearly 4,000 francs, or \$800. The men bought everything we had, and all that we had—oranges, jam, candy, cigarettes and tobacco, bar chocolate, etc., and a score of things that a man needs to keep himself fit, from tooth-paste to shaving-brushes.

The canteen service of the Red Triangle at the front is an absolute necessity. There is no other place "alive" within miles; the villages are utterly empty, for in the years that have passed since the war began even the broken furniture has completely disappeared. Not a villager remains. The Y. M. C. A. sells nothing from the standpoint of traffic for gain; it hopes to keep its losses as low as possible, but it constantly "short-changes" itself. Tons of supplies are given away outright in the "trench trips," and daily the canteens serve hot drinks free. Now and then criticisms are heard because the extreme difficulty of transportation and the high cost of every commodity, a cost that constantly fluctuates, cannot be generally understood; but the commissary department of the Red Triangle is giving vastly more than one hundred cents for the dollar; giving it with efficiency and despatch.

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My first afternoon in the cellar was uneventful but strenuous. I found myself compelled to learn the ropes under pressure. Men wanted everything that was hard to find; and it seemed, too, that every man was either just out of the trenches—which began right there and extended in

communicating trenches, the reserve and the most advanced trenches, nearly a mile on in front of us—or just going in, and therefore in a great rush. I was slow on the prices, too; but, when I was in doubt, I simply put it up to the men; only once was I deceived, and then the Y. M. C. A. got too much money! I saw but one man in France who had a dishonest streak in him, and I speak with deep sympathy of that man; he was born with a twist, and was killed by a shell only a few hours after a Y. M. C. A. secretary caught him in the act of stealing from a comrade. The fellows over there are a "plumb-line" crowd.

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I made chocolate in the big iron bucket, and gave it away; that is, I tried to. But why dwell on that tragedy? It was better the next time. One of the men from the first-aid room gave me a few lessons while he swept out for me.

At about six o'clock a chap who had been eying me for some few minutes said, "Say, *I know you; who are you?*"

He was right. He had been president of a Christian Endeavor society in Newport, Va. With fine frankness he told me of uniting with the First Church of Christ there; we had met at a State Christian Endeavor convention. Another lad who had listened to the conversation remained long enough to tell me that he lived in Macon, Ga., and that he saw me first in Griffin, the same State. He was the "birdman," in charge of the carrier-pigeons, and had been in that first affair back in 1917 when Germany captured her first American prisoners. By the way, a strangely impressive sight it is to see a white dove circling above the battery to get its bearings and then flying swift and straight toward the red flag in the trenches to which its training calls it.

A considerable crowd was lingering about while I lunched out of a can of peaches and on crackers. Breakfast was brought in to me by one of the men, who carried it back from the company kitchen in my mess kit, and I took it with one hand while I "shoved the stuff" with the other. Dinner I went out for, as already related; but "lunch" was a less formal affair. While I munched away, I watched the fellows, those who were ready to go in. They were fully equipped, had their gas-masks at attention, as we all did, and were in helmets. There was very little profanity, no vileness; and some of them did not smoke. I was often surprised by the number of men who spent no money on cigarettes. As for the swearing, the Y. M. C. A. hut has an atmosphere that, while it does not stifle cursing, does make the men themselves prefer to be without it. They welcome a place that is different! The secretaries remember first that they are there to minister, and to minister to all; they do not preach at the fellows, but some of them are real geniuses. One put up a "menu" that said among other perfectly rich things, "Please don't swear; the secretary is trying to break himself of the habit."

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And let us be perfectly frank about the cigarette problem that troubles so many of us. That it is a problem I am fully persuaded. Leading medical authorities in all armies recognize the fact that the nicotine bondage now fastening upon the men *and women* of the war-ridden nations will be a slavery of heavy chains for the next generation. Giving evidence before the city exemption appeal courts in Montreal in January, 1918, Dr. G. E. Dube said that he was appalled at the amount of illness prevailing among men of military age, and that he attributed the trouble chiefly to cigarettes.

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Personally I hate the cigarette. I have seen its fine fiendishness. But to-day society has time for only absolutely "first things." Some seem to think that because the world is on fire the time is ripe for an anti-smoking crusade. I do not. Just as the next generation must carry largely the financial burden of the war, so it must solve the many physical and moral problems that this generation let fall from its hands when it gripped the sword. Personally, I have put the cigarette, for the man in the service who uses it, in the same class with the strychnine the doctor prescribes. There are hundreds of thousands of men in the trenches who would go mad, or at least become so nervously inefficient as to be useless, if tobacco were denied them. Without it they would surely turn to worse things. Many a sorely wounded lad has died with a cigarette in his mouth, whose dying was less bitter because of the "poison pill." The argument that tobacco may shorten the life five or ten years, and that it dulls the brain in the meantime, seems a little out of place in a trench where men stand in frozen blood and water and wait for death.

This statement is not a defence of the cigarette; it is an honest effort to make clear the position of the Y. M. C. A., facing an immediate crisis in a diseased world, and required to function or fail. I found splendid opportunities to help the non-smoker without appearing to "preach." When he didn't "use them," I said, "Shake, neither do I. How do we live?" When a man in trying to make even change suggested "another pack," I said, "Better try something else; you've driven enough coffin-nails to-day." In many huts Dr. George Fisher's book on tobacco is placed on the counter by the side of the cigarettes. The men have here available the positive instruction that at least does them no harm. In the educational campaign which will follow the war those who were able to adjust themselves to the peculiar needs of this abnormal time will have the greater ministry.

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At nine o'clock I took down the stovepipe that ran up through the little window in the far corner of the selling-section of the canteen, and dropped the heavy gas-curtain; a little later the double gas-curtains at the door were also dropped. A good hour was spent in "cleaning up." Boxes were re-arranged with the assistance of the man who lingered; I laid the fire for the morning, and studied the stock so as to be quicker on my feet the next day. I left a few candle stubs on the table for the "gas-post," the man standing on guard to protect the soldiers in the billets, signal-corps room, and first-aid dressing-station from being surprised by a possible gas attack. All of these men were in this same dugout or series of dugouts. For another hour I wrote a few brief letters and filled out my order-blank for the next day. Our stock was very low.

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It was now nearly midnight. There were no stragglers left in the canteen, and all about me I

could hear the regular breathing of the tired sleepers. Putting on my helmet and pushing aside the curtains, I climbed the steep stairs, and walked for a few minutes in the chill February night beneath a cloudless sky. The guns were going ceaselessly; back and forth the huge shells moaned like tired and unwilling men; they were not tired when they landed! Down on the line the rat-rat-rat-rat-rat of the machine guns, with the explosions so close together as to give almost the sound of ripping canvas, rang out at irregular intervals. They were spraying No Man's Land, searching for enemy patrols. The huge trucks and great wagons that had been pounding the road since early dark bringing up supplies and ammunition were still busy; it was a good night for the "mule-skinners" (mule-drivers) and for men at the wheels; they could move faster, and the moon reduced to a minimum the danger of accidents.

I stood for a minute or two by a dirty pool in the centre of what had been a formal garden, and wondered where the grace and beauty of the ancient house had gone. Only the pool, the crushed marble walls of the chateau, and the splintered trees remained of that which had been the glory of an ancient name. [58]

I slept profoundly that night; general shelling does not disturb one's rest unless it stops. I say that I slept profoundly; I did until two in the morning when the gas experience, related elsewhere, crept into my diary.

The second day was quite as busy as the first, and there were at least a score of feature stories. The life of a hut-manager is not monotonous; his contribution to the cause of his country is second to the contribution of no other. My little glimpse of his parish was quite convincing.

All the morning the talking-machine was busy. The selections varied with the mood of the man playing it. I wanted to choke the chap who started Homer Rodeheaver's "Tell Mother I'll Be There." No violence was used, but several besides myself choked before the record was finished. Mother is everything plus, over there. To the fellow who has seen her blessed face in dreams beneath a battle's flaming sky she will never be taken for granted again. A thousand little things bring him close to her—the socks that he tries to darn, the button that he sews on, the food that reminds him. A letter from a mother makes a lot of heaven over there—if it is the right kind, *if it is the kind that makes a son proud of his mother*. A message of courage, of cheer, of news; details of the commonplace,—the coming of the spring birds back to the house he built, the addition to the neighbor's home, the new paper on the wall, the bright gossip of the street or town, the tragedy of the bread that burned while you wrote him, such a message builds morale faster than flags, or music, or the speeches of captains. [59]

Just before dinner a stretcher-party brought in a man who had been painfully, though not seriously, injured by the explosion of a "75." His helmet had deflected the fragment. He was standing in the door of the bomb-shelter when he fired the gun, but one ear had been nearly severed and his neck had been deeply cut. After he had been fixed up I put him on a box by the little stove, and gave him some hot tea.

He was shaken and nervous. In just such a situation the secretary has his "big chance." The boy said: "This will sure kill my mother. She's a frail little thing, never could stand trouble; when she hears I'm hurt, she'll just lie down and die."

I came back with "Don't you believe it. That isn't the way it works at all. When your mother hears of this, she'll say: 'Thank God, he's *only* wounded. Now I know he's safe for a little while.'" And I went on: "You have *yours*; comparatively few men ever get two wounds, and after nearly four years of war still there aren't enough wounds to go around." [60]

But it didn't do the business.

Then I asked him where he lived, and he said, "The Bronx."

"I'll tell you what I'll do, old man," I said; "I'll call her up as soon as I reach New York, and later I'll go and see her."

Bang! he blew up! Down into his hands went his sore head, and then he was better. He was just a boy after all and through it all. But what a boy!

When I went up to "mess" that day, an orderly pointed out to me through a crack in the camouflage a ruined plane a kilometer away in the open and under constant observation from both lines. In it was the body of a famous German flier. Things had been too hot for our men to go out and bring in the remains. Mt. Sec towered above us, nine hundred feet high. We knew that it was a vast nest of German guns. Like Gibraltar it stands in front of Metz. But it is not impregnable. Twice the French have demonstrated that; and, when the hour strikes, Mt. Sec will not turn these allied armies back.

I felt something cold touch my hand, and, looking down, saw a kindly-eyed, well-fed dog inspecting me. These dogs are the only "original settlers" left on the line. They were lost in the first rush, I suppose; and now, cared for by the fighting men, they watch the walls that daily dwindle, and wait with dumb loyalty for the return of their masters. [61]

One of the men brought me a "beautiful" fragment of a mustard-gas shell. His little gift helped a lot, for it told me that I was beginning to "arrive." Later I received the nose of a shrapnel "made in Germany"; the shrapnel broke above the dugout, and the nose dropped "dead" in the entrance. Another fellow, a youngster who must have fibbed a lot to get into the army, pulled a Testament out of his *upper left-hand pocket* to replace it with something else, and then said, as he thought out loud, "Nope," and back went the book. There is an unadmitted tradition that the "book" keeps German steel away from the heart, and it does in more ways than one.

That evening I had plenty of assistance, and things moved like clockwork. There was nearly a catastrophe, though. Two of the men were trying to fix a carbon lamp that had been useless for several days, and it caught fire. The way that dugout emptied itself was a sight to behold.

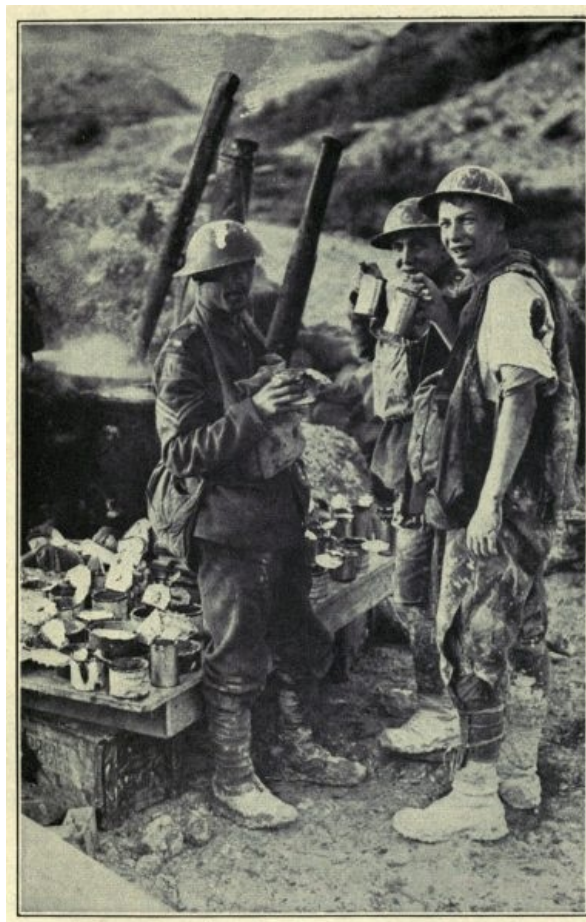
After eight o'clock we had a "home-talent" frolic, and it was some show. There was no room for acrobatics, but practically everything else that a well-ordered minstrel show should have we had.

"At midnight in his guarded tent"—that doesn't really fit here, but at midnight the Pierce-Arrow arrived with *oranges*, blood-oranges from Italy. We were out of everything but tobacco, and I was desperate before the oranges came. What fellows they are who keep the supply lines open for the Y. M. C. A.! Day and night they work, with a smile. Every risk the ammunition drivers run, they accept, and without complaint. They left me fifteen boxes of oranges, and a good word that sang me to sleep. This night I slept better, and there was no gas alarm.

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The third day it *rained*—shells! At ten the entrance suddenly darkened as if the gas-curtain had been dropped. It looked as if every man of General Pershing's army was trying to come to see me in a great hurry, and ahead of every other man who was bound in the same direction. For several minutes I had noticed the quickened firing and that the explosions were unusually close; but, feeling safe myself and being busy, I had paid little attention to the noise. The Germans were trying to muss up the batteries just behind us, and a torrent of shells was now falling. The big outdoors had suddenly become too small, and the men were taking cover.

One chap, longer and louder than the rest, came in waving one boot above his head, and in his sock feet. When I inquired solicitously after the other shoe, he sang out, "Left it; didn't need it, anyhow."



**Y. M. C. A. SERVING SOUP AND HOT COFFEE TO WOUNDED
MEN**

One hundred yards from the front line.

He was cleaning his equipment in front of his billet when an "H. E." (High Explosive) dropped just across the street from him and close against an old wall. He cut the "Kaiser's party" in a hurry. A shell dropped in the old pool, two just to the right of the entrance, and several others did spring ploughing in the abandoned garden hard by. But not a man was scratched, and not a missile reached its objective. The "doves of peace" from Germany presently stopped coming over, and we breathed more freely.

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While we were giving our friend of the lonely shoe some unsolicited advice, a sergeant came in and told a thrilling tale of an alarm that had been distributed along the road by a wild-eyed "runner" holding his nose and yelling, "Gas!" at the top of his voice.

At six o'clock Heints came back. He was as fresh as a daisy and as happy as a lad just arrived "out to old Aunt Mary's." It was with a pang of regret that I surrendered the place to him. It was not easy to go away. Always I shall remember that dark place and treasure my recollections of it. May all the men I knew there come safely home!

It was a long jaunt back. In one village we passed through, the clock in the church tower had stopped at 4.30 P.M., when the first shell hit it; in another at 2.25 P.M. Both had been silenced in

the early days of stern fighting before Toul. When will they start again? Ah, no! that is not the question. "How soon shall the power that turned back the clock of civilization be stopped?"—that is the question. That question America is answering with her treasure and with the best of her breed.

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By a long line of trucks and wagons we ran,—two hundred of them,—ready to go on in under cover of darkness. In another place fifty-seven ambulances were ready for quick action, and by them a hundred fresh artillery horses were watering.

That night I slept again in the house by the cathedral. I dreamed of muddy men and bursting shells, of scampering rats and a phonograph, and I awoke—disappointed.

CHAPTER VII

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"HE'S A HUN, BUT WE'RE AMERICANS"

With a wild clatter a twelve-foot section of the ceiling came down. We sat up in our bunks and waited. It occurred to me that no shell had exploded *above*, *within*, or immediately *about* the "hut," and that this interruption of our peaceful slumbers must be due to the vibrations from our own batteries; there was consolation in the thought. But I did not fall asleep again. Our guns were going on at a terrific rate now. It was no ordinary shelling of enemy objectives, no mere following of a regular schedule by which "big ones" and "little ones" are dropped on military roads, headquarters, and concentration-points in "Germany."

Pest, secretary in charge of the "hut," who in happier times is physical director of the Young Men's Christian Association in Newark, N. J., said: "Something doing. That's a barrage; wonder whether they're coming across or whether we are going over. The first brigade is due for relief to-day; guess the Hun knows it, and is 'speeding the departing guest.' We'll sure have company for breakfast if our fellows keep on stirring up the animals."

Presently the "company" arrived. First the gas-alarm was given, and we hurried into our masks. I kept on my waterproof, so that my friends would not see my *knees in action*! Then the shrapnel began to spray, and high explosives felt out our guns. The throaty roar of our seventy-fives mingled with the longer and nearly double shocks of enemy explosions. We knew that "William" would not waste shells on us; but we knew, too, that we were desperately near the places he was trying to find, and that even modern military science is not *always* exact.

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There was a stern patter on the roof—spent shrapnel; a few minutes later it came again with a sterner knocking and the sound of an explosion directly overhead, but high. Hummel got up and opened the door. He looked out, and then *closed the door*. Simultaneously with the banging of the door a huge explosion took place in our back yard. Hummel said that he saw the field go up as high as the spire of the ruined village church. There was a mighty rush of wind and a scream of steel; a fragment of high explosive tore out the sash of a window, and "carried on." This particular piece of projectile passed through the hut less than twenty-five feet from the cots.

From three o'clock in the morning until seven the shelling was heavy, the roar of the guns was continuous. It then lessened, but for the rest of the day and through the night there was no quiet. During the barrage, the reason for which we learned a few hours later, our village suffered more than usual. In one billet six men were instantly killed and five were horribly wounded. In another billet there was a fatality, and a French soldier was killed at the meeting of two streets as he walked towards his home, going back on his first "leave" in two years.

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We waded through the mud to our "mess" just across the street; good, steaming hot, and well prepared it was. I went back for a "second," as is the privilege of every man provided he waits until all have had the first serving.

It was the first day of the month, and so while Pest fixed the packs for the trenches, and Hummel (Rev. Mr. Hummel, of California, if you please) completed a sink and drain which his deft hands had begun the day before, I took account of stock, and incidentally packed more securely on the shelves the supplies that were in quantity. The bombardment was shaking things loose. At 10 A.M. Pest and I started for the trenches, with the former remarking to Hummel that if things continued so active the supply-truck would hardly get in, and that it might be well to "shove the stuff" a bit easy to conserve what we had.

Up the road we hiked toward Germany. Our sacks held a hundred pounds of chocolate, nuts, cigarettes, and oranges, things that the regular and necessarily severe front-line mess could not duplicate. The oranges came from Italy, and the chocolate was made by Americans in French or Swiss factories taken over by the Y. M. C. A. Trench supplies are never sold; these are "specials," gifts to those who for days at a time must bear the body and nerve destroying ordeal of the most advanced places. No man who has not seen the faces of the men and heard their "Thank yous" can appreciate what these trench trips of the Red Triangle mean to the soldiers of the Republic. Every day the secretaries go "in," and clear in. To the last observation-post they carry the extra food, the bit of luxury, and the strong man's word and grip of comradeship that build fighting spirit and morale.

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For a mile the going was easy, the road-bed straight away toward the trenches; and the footing beneath five or six inches of mud was firm. At "Dead Man's Curve," a bad spot which bends out

from behind a great ammunition-dump and passes between batteries on into another ruined village, we took a short cut across the field. The mud at the bend was red, and the road was filled with blood; an empty supply-wagon had been caught there earlier in the morning. The two men on the driver's seat and all of the mules had been killed. For five hundred yards we continued across the shell-ploughed field; now and then we were forced to turn out of the direct path to avoid shell-holes close together; several times I found as many as three small craters with rim touching rim. [69]

The firing continued heavy, and the moaning missiles passed one another high above our heads. There were explosions half a mile away, and the surface of the earth was churned with fury; but no shells dropped near. We entered the communication-trench at the far edge of the great military road that at this particular point parallels the first line of fifteen miles. It runs directly in front of the last heavy batteries, and to a height of twenty feet is carefully camouflaged with branches and painted canvas. The camouflage does not disguise the location of the road itself; but it does hide the movements of troops, munitions, and supplies from the enemy observers, who here look down upon our lines from a famous mountain which towers nine hundred feet above our position.

The morning was cloudy; mist was in the air, and a little later it began to snow. We caught glimpses now and then of another ruined village, the battalion headquarters (a kilometer from the head of the communicating trench), where we reported before going on to the most advanced positions. Presently we met a lieutenant coming out. He was smiling, and without being asked for information told us that the enemy had come over in force with shock troops after shelling the lines for twelve hundred meters on either side of the eight-hundred-meter front which bore the full weight of the infantry attack. He gave us no details; but, as he hurried on, he assured us that "the boys brought away the bacon." [70]

We reported to the major on reaching headquarters, and learned from him that the company we had planned to serve that morning had been very "busy"; that it was digging itself out, reopening the trenches after the intense bombardment, clearing away the dead, looking after the wounded; and that he would prefer to have these supplies taken into Company K, where things were in better order. He spoke with pardonable pride when he informed us that already the men at the most advanced listening-posts had been served with food and red-hot coffee. We began to understand the heavy firing of the morning. Our guns had been supporting the infantry, and German guns had been trying to silence them.

A sergeant, covered with blood but happy, had just made his report for Company I. He accompanied us until our paths, or rather trenches, separated. He was going back to the "busy" portion of the front. His story was interesting, to say the least. During the preparatory bombardment which preceded the raid he was buried in a dugout. When the barrage lifted for the raiders to come across, he dug frantically toward the faint light that came through a tiny opening in the shattered roof. Suddenly two hand-grenades were hurled through his little window of hope. Both exploded, but the sergeant miraculously escaped. Indeed, the grenades helped him out! He despatched the thrower, and leaped into the heart of the counter-attack. How fierce that counter-attack was may be judged from the fact that every commissioned officer of his company was killed or wounded before it was crowned with triumph. [71]

The Germans were forced into our supporting barrage, and were virtually annihilated. It was a demoralized remnant indeed that reached German lines to make a report far different from what had been anticipated. But our losses were not light. Our first infantry captain to die in action was killed that morning at the head of his men. Five out of the six lieutenants "up" at the time were wounded, and the sixth followed his gallant captain. The sergeant spoke slowly when he recounted the losses, but he was jubilant when he recalled the perfect support given by the artillery. We knew and he knew that the first great test had come, and that Americans had not been found wanting in courage, initiative, or skill.

Presently we reached company headquarters as the major had directed us, and heard at length the story of the morning. With a guide we now went on. Hip-boots did little good, for the "chicken-ladder" trench floor had been badly smashed by the shelling. Often we sank to our hips. The boys were mighty glad to get the candy and fruit. The Italian oranges were our leaders! A soft-voiced Southern lieutenant gave us additional details, and told us how the gallant French on our right came down and dropped in behind us at a distance of five hundred yards. There in the open they lay, a reserve against the possible breaking through of the enemy. No Man's Land looked strangely peaceful through our parapet, and the German barbed wire a hundred and seventy yards away was more like loganberry trellises in Oregon than part of a war machine in France. The company had lost only one man during the shelling, and it had not suffered in the raid. [72]

It was nearing one o'clock when, returning, we reached the place where our friend the sergeant had left us. Pest looked down the trench toward headquarters, and then down the front line toward the low ground where we had originally planned to go, and where the boys were "busy." Surely things were cleaned up now, and they would be hungry for a bit of chocolate and a strong word. I followed him toward the left, but not without forebodings. There was plenty of noise in front of us, and I was sure that the enemy would not co-operate with the engineers who were restoring our trenches, by refraining from shelling them. The "little ones," three-inch high explosives, were falling not far away; but we were well covered. We crossed the low ground where the boys had suffered so seriously from the gas attack three days before, and then entered the woods, whose tree-trunks bore many new wounds. [73]

At the far edge of the woods our progress was completely blocked. Working parties filled the space. All about were the marks of the bloody struggle. Not all the dead had been carried back, but the wounded were either out or had been started toward the rear. There were yet bodies in the barbed wire, hanging like ghastly scarecrows.

We emptied our sacks, and right about faced. The firing was steadily increasing, and we hurried our steps. When we came to the place where we had entered the woods, we found our way barred again. Two stretcher parties were resting under the cover of the little ruined forest. One carried the remains of the second lieutenant, who had been killed by a trench mortar; the other bore a wounded German prisoner, a fine-looking, husky Bavarian whose legs had been fearfully mangled. The carriers were worn out; it had been a "busy" morning for them, too. They were within a hundred yards of the point where it was necessary to leave the trench and take to the open. The trench had been so shattered by the shelling that a stretcher could not be carried through it. The light had been growing steadily better, and it was very apparent that German observers, at this point less than two hundred yards away, would quickly spot a party taking to the open. But there was nothing else to do. Pest volunteered to lend a hand, and together we carried the wounded prisoner to the point where with assistance we lifted him to the parapet. [74]

The two stretcher parties now started down across the low ground in the open, their burdens shoulder-high, not only for greater ease in carrying, but to give the "kultured" gentlemen across the way a square and open look. The going was heavy. After carrying for perhaps three hundred yards the four of us who had lifted the burden at the parapet were relieved. Pest and I now increased our speed in the direction of battalion headquarters, which were in plain view and not more than a kilometer away as the bird flies.

Suddenly hell opened. A barrage was put down upon the field. I can hear to-day as distinctly as I heard it then the close-up crash of German guns, and almost simultaneously with that the cry of the officer in charge of the stretcher, "Scatter!" Then all about us the shells dropped and broke. I suppose that the barrage lasted ten minutes, hardly more, but it was a kind of eternity. It seemed to my terrified eyes that no foot of ground about us was left untouched. That night an observer in our line, on his way back after being relieved, stopped long enough to say that more than two hundred shells fell within a radius of fifty yards from the centre of our party.

I sprawled upon my face, and rolled over into a very shallow shell-hole. At my right, and not ten feet away, suddenly a man was lifted into the air; five feet he seemed to go up. He turned over, and came down with a flop into a shell-hole filled with water. Aside from the shock and bruises he was uninjured. The "three-inch" had gone in, by his side and at an angle, almost under him. But in the open and in soft ground high explosives are not particularly dangerous unless they score direct hits. They penetrate so far before they explode that they are largely smothered; and, while they kick up a great commotion, their bark is worse than their bite. [75]

Fortunately for our little party, this barrage had no shrapnel mixed with it; had there been shrapnel, the story would be of another sort. But I was so profoundly frightened that I made no distinction between high explosives and shrapnel.

I found myself trying to hide behind a rock no larger than a baby's fist. I envied the white dog, which wheeled about on his hind legs, barking angrily in a dozen directions at once, trying to cover each new explosion. I envied not his bark, but his potential speed, and called him a fool for not using it.

And then I heard some one say,—or perhaps it was my own heart speaking,—"Run for it!" and faster than I ever left the scratch on a cinder path, in the days when I was credited with 10 1-5 seconds for the hundred-yard dash, I got away. As I ran, I thought of two things. First, I breathed a prayer of thankfulness for the additional five thousand of war-risk life-insurance that I had taken out just before leaving New York; and then I remembered the ancient tale of the colored brother who heard the bullet twice, once when it passed him and once again when he passed it! And I did my best to emulate the hero of the tale. Two men reached headquarters before I did, but they were younger men and unimpeded by trench coats. [76]

I followed Pest into the presence of the major,—we ran a dead heat!—and heard his report. The major smiled, a trifle anxiously, told us of the *comparative* safety we had really enjoyed because of the soft ground and high explosives, and then inquired, "Did the carriers stay with the prisoner?" Pest replied, "I am not sure, sir; I did not look around, but I am inclined to think that he is out there alone." Some one felt it in order to remark that if the Hun wanted to kill his own wounded, he ought to be given the privilege of doing so "without mussing up any good Americans"; and then the major said: "Yes, *he's a Hun, but we're Americans. Go back and get him.*"

I am writing these lines more than five thousand miles from the candle-lighted room in the bomb-shelter of that battalion headquarters; but, as I write them, I cross the sea, and stand again by the side of the rough table where I stood that March afternoon when the major startled me out of my terror into soberness and quiet with his "Yes, he's a Hun, but we're Americans. Go back and get him." I believe that I am better for trying to give the German the benefit of the doubt; for *half* thinking that, after all, he may not have recognized the nature of the party crossing the open field. But the major waived the whole question of German "frightfulness," and leaped at once into the heart of American traditions of war and America's military idealism. He saw only a prisoner, wounded and under fire, and—he knew his duty. [77]

And before we continue this story let us halt for a moment with the "major." I saw him only once and under tense and extreme circumstances. His battalion had just come through a baptism of

fire that will not be forgotten when the story of America's part in the great war is told. I do not know how he looked in a dress uniform or when he was clean-shaven; I have no conception of what his carriage was in a drawing-room; and I am uninformed as to his church affiliation—if he had any. But he acted like a soldier that afternoon and talked like a Christian. I am sure that he was every inch a soldier, too; for he fought through the Spanish-American war, and was a major in the Philippine constabulary. He enlisted in the British army; but, when the Stars and Stripes came to stand by the side of the Union Jack, he *moved over*, and was commissioned a major in the national army. I intended to write him a letter after I returned; but now that will be unnecessary, for to-day at the top of a column I read, "American colonel killed in action," and below, "Lieutenant-Colonel Richard H. Griffiths; commanding a battalion of infantry, has been killed by shell-fire in Picardy. He emerged from a dugout just as a German shell arrived and exploded directly in front of him." And now he stands at attention before the Commander whose orders, whether he thought of it in that way or not, he so completely obeyed.^[1] [78]

As the major spoke, he turned to a lieutenant, and said, "Get those carriers, and send them back." Pest and I followed the lieutenant into the open. The lieutenant inquired of Pest the location of the prisoner; and the man from Newark replied, "*I'll show you.*" It was at this point that the writer made a speech. The speech was brief, but logical and unanswerable. I told Mr. Pest that he had no business to go back. True, the barrage had lifted, but the Germans had another one where the first one came from, and they might decide to spare it! Then, too, he—Pest—had done not only his full duty, but more. To go back would be to expose himself needlessly and also to run the risk of having the trenches closed to the Y. M. C. A. "What will the army over here say if it gets the idea that you Y. M. C. A. fellows are sticking your heads above parapets and rambling around in open fields? How long will it stand for the Y. M. C. A. man's assuming a rôle that does not belong to him? Granted that you did the only thing you could do by helping with that prisoner when you ran into the immediate need, this return trip is another proposition." [79] [80]

I laid hands on my friend; but he started up the road for the open field, showing the way to the lieutenant, and with a heavy heart I followed another officer to indicate the carriers who must go out to help bring in the wounded man. Pest had made no reply to my speech, and I knew that my *logic* was sound; but that didn't satisfy my heart, with Pest out there. And Pest's heart would not have been satisfied, had he allowed me to win the debate.

I came back and stood at the head of the road leading through the tumbled walls, out by some abandoned trenches with tangles of rusted wires above them, and on into that open field where so many brave men had fought and died since the first rush came down from Metz. "Poor place to spend a vacation," said the sentinel, who stood post there, and scarcely had the last word left his lips when that field again became an inferno. I could not see my friend and those who had gone to join him, a slight rise in the ground and an old cut-to-pieces orchard obscured the view; but the air was full of earth and rocks, and I was sure that I saw fragments of bodies in the vortex. Surely men could not come again unscathed through such a horror.

And now I was forced into the sickening acknowledgment that, while my logic had been sound when I sought to dissuade Pest from returning to the prisoner, my nerve had not been. I knew that my feverish urgency was not unmixed with personal fear. Never did a more sick and anguished heart cry out to God than the one that supplicated for that stretcher party. *But it did not appear!* When the suspense became unbearable, I hurried to the major; and, when I told him the situation, he became very grave. He had been trying for some minutes to silence our own batteries, fearing that the enemy would continue to concentrate their fire on objectives near our battalion headquarters if our firing continued to stir them up. And our fire *was* stirring them up! Our shelling was deadly and unrelenting. The major wanted to give that party in the field a chance to get back. But his communications were down. Already two runners had been despatched, and the signal-corps men were working frantically. [81]

I asked for permission to go down the road a little way to see whether there might be a sign of the men. I could not face my own soul without knowing for myself what Pest's end was. The major understood, and down the road I went. A great fear possessed me, but it was a new kind of fear. I reached the edge of the open place; there was no sign of life anywhere. The snow was falling again, and I hurried on. I met a runner; he had not seen the party. Three minutes more, and I was on the spot where the first barrage broke; and still there was no sign. [82]

Suddenly the tightening about my heart loosened, and I fairly shouted, "There would be *something* left, if they were dead." A second runner was skirting the woods we had passed through earlier in the day. I ran to meet him, and fairly choked him to get the information that I was desperately searching for. "Yes," he had seen them. They had waited till the shelling stopped, and then from the cover of the woods he had watched them rush the stretcher back to the trench. They had followed close against the lower side of the trench, the longer way into the village. This brought them into the lower end of the town, and gave them a slight cover for the entire distance. It was the way we should have taken in the beginning.

"And now," the runner said, "this is our 'busy' afternoon,"—I had heard the word so often that day,—"and we must get to headquarters 'toot sweet!'" The youthful veteran instructed me to follow him at a distance of twenty paces, and he led the way down the road which skirted the edge of the field farthest from the German lines. The snow was falling more rapidly now, and we were practically safe from observation. We walked in the shallow ditch by the roadside, so that in case shelling was resumed we could avail ourselves of its protection. By lying flat we should be on a level with the surface of the ground. [83]

The road was deep in mud, and I saw the prints of *French* boots! Then I remembered what the

lieutenant had said in the morning of the gallant French reserves, and realized that I was on the exact spot where they had waited in the open behind our trenches. A rush of emotion overwhelmed me, and I wept. Suddenly in front of me I saw a mask, a *blue* gas-mask, half buried in the mud, lying where the brave Poilu had dropped it only a few hours before. When I showed it to the major a little later, soaked with water and with *blood*, ruined and useless, he said, "Take it home to your children; you are a millionaire." Yes, a millionaire in the treasure of sentiment, by the wealth of the vision the blue mask brings to me of the comradeship of democracy in suffering and in sacrifice.

Before we reached the edge of the village the batteries became busy again, but at first their objectives seemed to be well beyond the town. Then without warning the fire assumed the intensity of a barrage, and the range was shortened so that the projectiles fell all over "headquarters." Such a spectacle I had never seen before. It was as though the heavens had opened and precipitated an ocean of soil, boulders, and trees upon the earth. No, rather the earth itself seemed to open as the result of some great sickness and vomit this terrifying spectacle upon us. The ground trembled, and the noise became literally deafening. I stood transfixed behind the runner. I was conscious of no other emotion than one of complete amazement. I had been in the midst of the former barrage, and *had not seen it!* We were perhaps one hundred and fifty yards away from this one, and so soon does one become accustomed to the eccentricities of shell-fire that we felt ourselves in no danger. We listened to the shells as they described their low arc above us, and knew instinctively whether they would land to the right or to the left, near us or relatively far away. One's judgment in these matters is much akin to his judgment of a batted ball; only he judges the shell altogether by its sound.

[84]

But we were roused from our stupor. Off at our left, not far away, a shrapnel broke, the first I had *seen* that day. For an instant I was paralyzed. The balls flew all about us; dirt spattered us; and then we ran! Straight toward that barrage we sprinted. Our one chance—and I knew it as well as the splendid fellow in front of me—was those abandoned trenches with their caved-in dugouts; we were not more than fifty yards from them. It was shrapnel now and no mistake. That we were not hit is merely one of the hourly miracles of the front. But we did reach, without being wounded, the old barbed wire with the barrage being pulled across the village and shortening in our direction, and with the shrapnel overhead. Both of us dove head first into the trench, and a good eight-foot plunge it was, into slime and water six inches deep. There we waited until the affair was over.

[85]

As suddenly as it begins, intense shell-fire ceases; this demonstration against battalion headquarters lasted in all not more than ten minutes. Then, save for explosions well up on the ridge or behind it in the region of the batteries, comparative quiet reigned. With my new-found friend I climbed out of our refuge and hurried into the village. Here I received another shock; aside from three men wounded, several old walls tumbled in, a score of small craters in the streets, and yards of destroyed camouflage the bombardment had done no injury. I was sure that bodies would be scattered everywhere. But the major was at his table, working furiously and as if nothing had happened; the signal-corps room hard by had been mused up; one shell had dropped close by the wall of the major's bomb-proof, and another had destroyed the camouflage at its entrance; but these experiences were with the day's work. With the first explosions just beyond the town the men had taken to the cellars, and there remained until the storm was over. The last few hours had given me a vivid demonstration of the truth of the statement that I had often heard, but scarcely believed, "It takes a thousand shells to kill a man by shell-fire."

[86]

My first inquiries were for Pest, and he was reported safe and waiting for me in the communicating trench; the sentinel at the head of the old road had given him a statement of my movements. The prisoner had been carried in, and presently he was hurried by in an ambulance bound for the hospital. Every hand that I had seen touch his stretcher had been a kindly, ministering hand; and the men who were risking their lives to bring him out had been prompt to express their admiration of his nerve; he was suffering terribly. He in his turn, when bearers "eased off" their load in the hard going of the open field, would say deeply between his groans, "*Schön, schön!*" ("Fine, fine.")

Shells exploding half a mile away had made me very nervous in the morning; but now as I hurried back, ploughing through the mud and snow of the communicating trench, sinking often to my hips, and pulling myself out as best I could, no sounds worried me. Men were coming in—the relief; they looked clean and fit. A machine-gun company passed me, and was eager for a few words of information. It was great to have good news for those fellows! At last I reached the main road; its inches of mud with firm footing beneath seemed a paradise. The field in front of the batteries had been reploughed since we crossed it in the morning, and there were many new craters about "Dead Man's Curve."

[87]

As darkness came down, we reached—home! and home it is to thousands of hungry-eyed lads who have become men in an hour. Home it is to these far-called soldiers of freedom, who pay the sterner price of the world's redemption. It holds them to their yesterdays; it grips them with their past. By its tables they sit and think and write; about its fire they talk and muse. In the atmosphere of its manly decency they breathe deeply and are purified; and the fellowship of those other soldiers who wear the red triangle makes them fit and strong in their hearts. Ah! as I stepped across the threshold of that place fenced with rough boards and set where heaven touches hell, I saw all things become new. We could not win this war without the Young Men's Christian Association; for, even though our armies reached Berlin, our souls would lose their way.

I put my trophies out of sight—the masks and some pieces of shell that I had taken from a shell-hole after I scrambled up from the first shock of the barrage. A few hurried changes were made,

and then we relieved Hummel, who had been working like a lonely Trojan all day.

Out of the corner of my eye I watched Pest. He didn't even know that he was a hero! When I think of him, I shall always see him as I saw him swinging down the road with the lieutenant, bound for the open field, head up and chin out, leaning slightly forward as he took the long and easy stride of the trained athlete—a soldier and a Christian, under higher orders than any that man ever gave or refused, facing death to be merciful, risking his own life to salvage the life of his enemy.

[88]

And Pest is more than one man; he is a type. This one day of his life, a trifle more than ordinary, to be sure, but not unlike scores of days he experiences, is a single page from the ledger of service which the Y. M. C. A. secretaries are writing on every front where freedom bleeds.

FOOTNOTE

- [1] A letter from Lieutenant David R. Morgan describes the circumstances under which Lieutenant-Colonel Griffiths was buried:

"The regimental chaplain was sick. There happened to be a Red Cross chaplain visiting us from Paris, so he officiated. The Boches were within a few hundred yards of us, so he had to whisper the ritual. It was pitch-dark and the boys had to be mighty careful to keep their shovels from clicking against stones. A few officers were present.

"The burial took place at midnight. A lantern or a candle would have helped, but the crackle of a match would have meant death. Twice the ritual was suspended while the mourners took to cover to avoid German bullets.

"Privates had gathered wild violets and poppies at the rear of the trenches, keeping them fresh in a dipper of water in a dugout. These were laid on the graves at night.

"The next night a Boche high explosive demolished the little cemetery, exposing the bodies. We had to bury Colonel Griffiths four separate times."

Lieutenant Morgan, who is an active Pennsylvania Christian Endeavorer, speaking further of Lieutenant-Colonel Griffiths, said: "The breast of his coat was covered with medals. He did not know what fear was. He never sent a man anywhere until he went first. I have seen him calmly walking along the street with the shells dropping on all sides."

CHAPTER VIII

[89]

"GAS! GAS! GAS!"

"Gas! Gas! Gas!" and the hand-siren rang through the dugout in accompaniment to the cry of the sentinel. The first shout sounded far away; I was sleeping deeply. The second brought me to my elbow, and the third sent my hands down through the inky darkness to the mask on my chest. I was wide-awake and in absolute command of every faculty. I remember the surprise with which I noted my calmness. I had feared that in just such circumstances I should go to pieces, or at least bungle things and fail in those first fateful seconds. But I adjusted my mask with precision, with deftness that my fingers had never before possessed; and I recalled every item of the instructions I had received.

I held my breath until the mouthpiece was between my teeth, attached the nose-clamp, shoved the mask far under my chin, and then pressed my face well into it while I firmly fixed the holding-bands about my head. Then I inhaled deeply, filling my lungs with the chemicalized air, exhaled violently, and noted with satisfaction the "glub, glub" of the little rubber exhaust that told me the machine was "hitting on every cylinder."

All the while I was fully conscious of the sounds and movements about me. I heard the rats scurry squealing into the corners. I scratched methodically on several inhabited portions of my anatomy. I listened to the muffled voices in the signal-corps room, which was just beyond the thin partition; the men on duty there with the trench telephones wore French masks that had neither nose-clamps nor mouthpieces. But, masks or no masks, signals and messages must go forward without delays. These lads of the signal stations, along with those "standing post" to give the warning, must add to the dangers that all face the extra ones that fall to the lot of men who are charged with the safety of their comrades. I listened to the soldiers stirring in the billets behind me—forty-seven bunks were there; and just across in the first-aid dressing-station I heard the stretcher party.

[90]

To all of these matters I was keenly alive while I adjusted my mask (I had on all my clothes), groped for the door opening out of my private sleeping-corner, which was almost exactly as large as the cot it contained, and stepped into the central room occupied by the Y. M. C. A. canteen. Here I found candles burning feebly.

Does this all sound like rare presence of mind and complete self-control? Do not be deceived. It was simply a case of nerves paralyzed with terror and of muscles responding mechanically to suggestions previously received. The acuteness of my perception and sense of hearing were evidences of acute fright.

[91]

The canteen soon filled with begoggled soldiers; we stood elbow to elbow, and waited. Was there

gas in the room? I wondered. Hardly time for that, because of the heavy blankets sealing the entrance to the cellar; one stairway and one deep-set window were the only openings through which either air or gas could penetrate. These were closed at night. The dugout itself was a kilometer back from the advanced trenches, and on comparatively high ground. I remembered that on the preceding day an officer in discussing a possible gas attack had said that our position was very favorable. But of course the enemy might be sending over gas-shells in a bombardment of the batteries just behind us, in which case our hole in the ground might become a veritable deathtrap to any one without a mask.

The ruins high above us trembled with the vibrations from our own guns. I looked up, and noted that the arched roof of the cement wine-cellar which was the basis for the entire dugout, or rather system of dugouts, where we were quartered did not show even a crack. We were in one of the finest bomb-proofs in that entire sector. After more than three years the direct hits of high explosives had not penetrated it. To its original thickness and strength had been added the tumbled-in walls of the glorious old building which once stood above it. Now and then shells bursting near the entrance to our shelter forced in the heavy curtains with the rush of air following the explosion. [92]

The firing from our own guns became more intense and rapid. What did it mean? Were we under general attack? Was a raid to be received, or were our lads to deliver one? Was our barrage—for the bombardment had assumed the intensity of curtain fire—a reply to German guns, or was it the initiating of a local offensive? I found myself getting out of hand, but remembered the alert officers out there in the greater danger, whose orders would answer my question soon enough.

Now another matter thrust itself upon my attention; my mouth and throat were full of saliva, and I didn't know what to do with it. At this point—and a vital one it is—my instructor had failed me. There are so many things to remember that it is surprising more is not forgotten. I became desperate. My predicament was far worse than a patient's in a dentist's chair with jaws clamped wide open and a rubber sheet jammed between his teeth. In the latter case one can signal with his hands, and indeed, under great provocation, a man has been known to kick the shins of his tormentor. But I knew that neither signalling nor kicking would now do me any good. There were questions, pressing questions, that I wished to ask; and I could not open my mouth to ask them. I could not even talk through my nose, for that was in a vise. My head now felt like a Noah's ark. It was a case of strangle or swallow. I decided that I had a choice between allowing the saliva to pour through the tube into the chemical can of the mask, or of somehow getting it down my throat. I took a deep breath, held firmly to the mouthpiece, and swallowed. Later I learned that I had done exactly the right thing. [93]

Minutes passed, and my eyes began to burn, and my goggles became blurred. I heard muffled coughing, and a sweat broke out upon me; were we to be trapped without a chance for our lives? But no orders came, and we waited on. Being in a group and in the station of a special gas sentinel, I knew that we were to depend upon this sentinel for further instructions and not to "test for gas" ourselves. Testing for gas is done by filling the lungs to their utmost capacity through the tube, releasing the nose-clamp, pulling the mask slightly away from one cheek, and sniffing. If gas is still about, the odor will be detected *unless the gas is odorless*; and the lungs, being already occupied by air, will not be affected. However, if your test has revealed the presence of gas, your mask has now become filled with the poison, and this must be got out. After readjusting the nose-clamp the lungs are emptied, and refilled through the breathing-tube; then simultaneously the mask is pulled away quickly from the cheek, and the breath instead of being exhaled through the tube is blown violently into the mask itself. By repeating this rather hazardous operation several times the mask is entirely cleared. [94]

But to return to the case in hand. I was fast becoming blinded by the moisture on my "windows." I now followed the instructions of my teacher, and brought out my "window-cleaner," the preparation which each man carries for thoroughly cleansing his goggles. Leaving the nose firmly held and continuing my strong bite on the mouthpiece, which is not unlike the mouth-hold in a football nose-guard, I pulled the bands off my head, the mask away from my cheeks, and with the speed of desperation cleansed the two glasses. After readjusting the mask, to free it from any possible gas I used the method described above.

Nearly an hour had passed. "All clear," came the cry, and again the hand-siren sounded. The reader cannot imagine the relief with which I uncovered my face. The men went quietly to their places; it was now apparent that the real seat of the trouble, whatever it was, had been located some distance away. In the morning we learned that only a "trace" of the gas had reached our high ground. The batteries continued their intense firing, but again we stretched out in our bunks. I had just covered myself when the warning came again, "Gas! Gas! Gas!" and for another thirty minutes I stood at attention. But after the second alarm our relief was permanent. I then made a record of the exact number of minutes the mask was in service, and turned in, to remain undisturbed until morning. [95]

This record, for which special charts are provided, is absolutely essential. The chemical in the British mask (box respirator) is good for forty-eight hours. The can containing the chemical is then exchanged for a new one. The mask itself, with proper treatment, lasts for a long time. While the more quickly adjusted, but far less reliable, French mask is also carried by our men, the British mask is chiefly relied upon. It is complete protection against every gas thus far developed; and the scientific men of the Allies are daily lessening the fiendish menace of gas. The spirit of the men who face the poison is expressed by Corporal Harold Hall of Bridgeport, Conn. In a letter to his mother he says: "We were under a heavy gas for four hours, and, to tell the truth, I'm glad we were, as I was always afraid of gas. But now that I've been through a good gas

attack I don't fear it at all, as there is absolutely no danger if a fellow is on the alert and not careless. Oh, this isn't such a terrible war, after all. We are used to it, and do not mind it near so much as you people at home do."

When day broke, we learned of the disaster that had overtaken our lines lower down. The first general gas attack experienced by Americans since the entry of the United States into the war had been directed against our sector. In the marshy ground on our right one company had suffered terribly. Men had died almost instantly; others had been carried back with little hope of recovery; and for several days a large number continued to develop the symptoms of the poisoning. Such is the nature of this fiendish weapon of refined barbarism. For hours it may hide its deadly sting, and encourage its victim by exertion and exposure to weaken himself for its final assault. Absolute rest and protection from the elements are vitally essential in all cases where this breath of death has found its way into the lungs. [96]

The suffering accompanying and following exposure to gas is too horrible to describe. Only a people completely committed to the propositions that the end justifies the means, and that might makes right, could have conceived the gas attack and first used it as a weapon against humankind.

My second serious experience with the gas came in a Y. M. C. A. hut above the ground and farther back. During the shelling incident to a general raid across our lines we used our masks for some time. The introduction of gas-shells has made it possible to reach a much wider area with this fiendish weapon than was the case at the beginning, when only the trench containers and projectors were used, and when the wind was relied upon to carry the fumes into the enemy's positions. Gas-shells are mixed in with shrapnel and high explosives, and when thus employed are often very deadly. Fired alone, they are distinguishable because of their peculiar explosive sound; but, when they are sent over in a general bombardment, the only way to be sure of escaping them is to use the mask continuously. [97]

Old shell-holes are often death-traps because of the gas that settles in them. The poison fumes, being heavier than air, will lie for hours, and under favorable atmospheric conditions for days, in the bottom of a crater or an abandoned trench. Soldiers seeking shelter in these holes are trapped. The French commanding officers at one time issued a general order prohibiting French soldiers from entering shell-holes. In some instances the "active" portions of the trench system are cleared of gas with shovels. Soldiers in masks actually *shovel* the heavier-than-air poison lying at the bottom of the trenches and filling the dugouts; they fling it over the parapets, where the air can reach and disperse it. The shovels have canvas flappers attached, which serve as fans. Clouds of chlorine gas are also dispersed by the use of a hypo-solution in a special sprayer.

The writer has a friend who entered a shell-hole near the head of a communicating trench which ran from a military road to battalion headquarters. He descended to lay a foundation for a Y. M. C. A. hut, and was completely overcome as soon as he stooped to begin work. A gallant French soldier, seeing the danger, leaped into the crater, and, standing as nearly erect as he could, pulled the unfortunate man to his feet. He held him there until others came to his assistance. My friend went to the hospital for three weeks. [98]

Much of the acute pneumonia and pleurisy, and thousands of cases of tuberculosis, reported among the Allies are superinduced by gas. For days men doctor persistent colds, only to find at last that the "stuff" has somewhere scorched them. I had been five days from the front, and was scores of miles removed from the scene of my last possible exposure, before my case was pronounced "gas-poisoning." For several days my "cold" had been increasingly annoying. My lungs were sore, my throat burned, my vocal chords were affected, and I coughed deeply. The mucous membrane of the mouth, throat, and nose became painfully inflamed, and even bled; my head ached constantly, and my eyes on the sixth day completely crossed. I could not have got more than a touch of the stuff. I have absolutely no recollection of any particular time when the thing might have occurred; indeed, I had congratulated myself that I had been unusually prompt to use my mask and exceedingly careful to take no chances.

Two months later a thorough examination resulted in the following report: "Röntgen examination of the thorax showed increased density of both apices, left more than right; marked thickening of right hilus." All of which means, according to the obliging man of science, that the lungs were left with scars as lungs are scarred from pneumonia or incipient tuberculosis. [99]

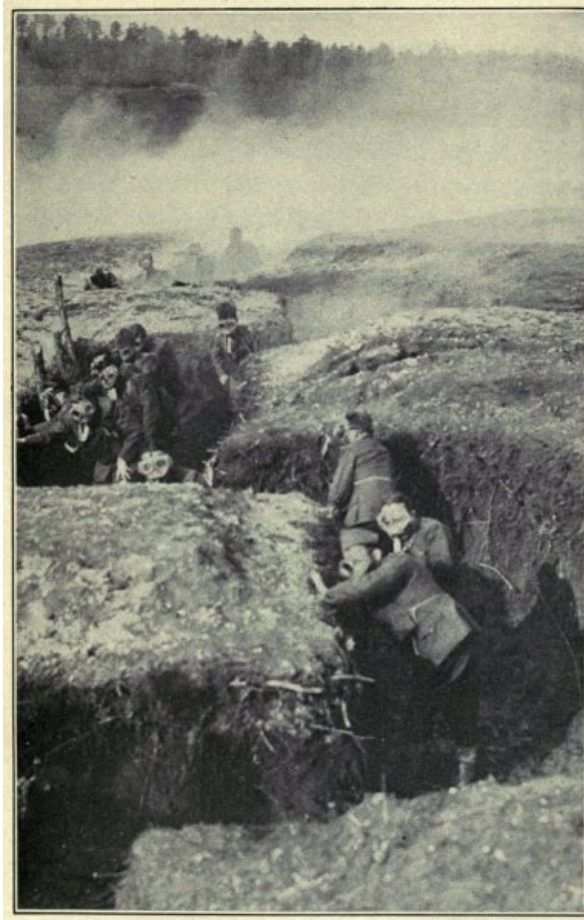
In the writer's slight case the depressing nature of the poison because of its action upon the organs of respiration and the nerve-centres was particularly noticeable. For weeks I experienced the constant sensation of smothering, felt "full" and "stuffed," as the proverbial "stuffed toad" looks. At night, when I could sleep at all, I suffered dreams of horror, and awoke struggling for a full breath; then always followed appalling wakefulness. My appetite returned slowly. I was favored with the best of care, enjoyed a delightful ocean voyage at just the right time, and had a perfect general physical condition to begin with. I have the assurance that my glimpse into what so many blessed sons of the republic must behold with wide-open eyes will leave no permanent evil after-effects. But it will cause me to see forever the travail of those who must experience the birth-throes of the new and better world, and the picture of Democracy's youthful martyrs will not fade from my eyes while the flowers of memory put forth and bud.

I think of Liberty Bonds now in terms of gas-masks; one fifty-dollar bond will *almost* buy *two* gas-masks! [100]

A driver on a truck or a wagon is especially exposed to the menace of gas. He is entirely removed from the warnings of the special gas sentinel, and the noise of his vehicle gives him no chance to

distinguish the peculiar sound of the bursting shell. Down into a bit of low ground the brave fellow swings; a sudden giddiness seizes him. He is fortunate indeed if it is only a whiff and he can adjust his mask before greater disaster overwhelms him.

In general attacks, where gas is extensively used, both sides are compelled to fight in masks; the attacking foe must enter territory he has previously drenched with his poison. With a gas-mask on a man is not more than fifty per cent efficient. In any sort of combat, but particularly in hand-to-hand fighting, it is a fearful handicap. The temptation to tear off the mask becomes practically irresistible. Heroic doctors have been known calmly to lay aside their masks when with their faces covered they could no longer serve their suffering charges.



A GAS ATTACK
American soldiers in their trenches wearing gas-masks.
Copyright by Underwood and Underwood, N. Y.

An enemy constantly strives to deceive its opponents into believing that gas is about to be used or has been used. If an unhampered raiding party can find trenches filled with men in masks in the all-important second when it leaps over the parapet, the success of its venture is virtually assured. Three days following the first general gas attack experienced by the American army the first general raid on our lines came across. Before the raid exactly the same methods were pursued, and the same demonstrations were made within the German lines that had preceded this first gas-attack. Many of our lads believed that a second gassing was imminent, and got into their masks. Just before the German barrage was lifted from our trench to the territory behind it, and at the exact time fixed for the starting of the raid, German patrols sent into No Man's Land shouted in perfect English, "Gas! Gas!" It was hoped that the Americans would be deceived into believing that their own patrols were giving the warning and that the raiders would find themselves confronted by begoggled opponents. In this instance the strategy completely failed; the raiders were virtually annihilated. [101]

It is interesting to note that in the affair just referred to long pipes filled with explosives were for the first time used against us to destroy our barbed wire. These pipes, some of them sixty feet long, were stealthily shoved under our wire, and at a signal were exploded simultaneously, with the concentrating of a brief barrage on the wire entanglements. Large sections of our wire were blown completely out of the ground.

Riding from London to Glasgow one afternoon, I became acquainted with a captain of the Black Watch. He was returning from Mesopotamia. For two years and six months he had been in service without a "leave." He was counting the miles to Dundee, and his eyes had the light of the home fires burning in them. We had talked about many things. He had told me of the death of General Maude, of the capture of Bagdad, and had given me what he believed to be the reasons for General Townshend's defeat. Finally I said, "Do you use the gas out there?" and he replied: "No; we have it ready, but we have never used it. *The Turks are Christians.* They don't use it." [102]

His answer gives more clearly than any argument I have ever listened to the statement of the difference between the spirit and programme of the Central Powers and the spirit and programme of the Allies. Gas was "made in Germany"; Autocracy and Absolutism are its parents.

Only a stern military necessity has finally forced it as a weapon into the hands of Democracy. Military *necessity*, I say, for not to meet gas with gas would be like opposing rapid-fire guns with spears. The "culture" that ravished Louvain, and that left on the cities of northern France the scars of rapine and murder that will never out, has made the air a poison breath.

CHAPTER IX

[103]

"THEY SHALL NOT PASS"

GLIMPSES OF THE SPIRIT OF THE TRENCHES

We were seated together at a Liberty-Loan dinner in Buffalo. He was in the British uniform and "wore" a cane, not a dress cane, but a heavy stick that took the place of a crutch. A naturalized American citizen, he enlisted first in an Irish regiment. After recovering from a serious wound he was discharged, but a few weeks in New York left him a restless man with eyes turning ever toward the sea. On the thirtieth of November, 1916, he re-enlisted, this time with a Canadian regiment in Toronto. Again he was "shot to pieces." Now he hobbles about with the same nervous eagerness that forced him away from home the second time. Another honorable discharge has not satisfied him, and he said to me,

"I hope I get over this so that I can re-enlist, this time under the Stars and Stripes."

No *man* who has been "over there" is ever again satisfied while water remains between him and the front. Not that he forms an appetite for war; he hates war. But so long as the fighters fight he will be in the valley of discontent when he is not on the field of action.

[104]

In England and in Scotland I found scores of men pining for France. They had been eager to get back to "Blighty." With straining eyes they had watched for her shores through the mists of the morning as the hospital ship found the channel of the home port, but now they begged for a chance to get back. Lieutenant-Colonel Cote, on his way to rejoin in Italy his command which he had left on the Somme when a bullet through his shoulder and back laid him low, said to me:

"I could not stay. They offered me a desk in London, and it was tough to leave the wife and little girls; but I couldn't stay."

At that time he was one of six men in the British Empire who had three times received the "D. S. O." (Distinguished Service Order)—once in South Africa where he enlisted as a private, and twice in France. After five months he was sufficiently recovered from his third wound to report for duty.

What is this spirit, the spirit of the trenches? There is humor in it. Lieutenant Johrens, who returned with me from France, was on the *Tuscania* when she was sent down by submarine attack. As the destroyer which picked up the boat company of which he was in charge cruised about in the darkness near the scene of the catastrophe, the officers heard singing in the distance. Searching out the spot from which the voices came, they found twenty privates on a catamaran, shouting lustily the refrain of the popular song,

[105]

"Where do we go from here, boys?
Where do we go from here?"

The Lieutenant added that a French pastor in Tours on being told the story seemed deeply impressed, but not even slightly amused. The next Sunday, referring to the incident, he said impressively to his sympathetic congregation:

"Our brave allies are not only men of action; they are all men of deep spiritual conviction. In danger their thoughts turn instinctively toward God. As they clung to their frail raft in the darkness of the tempest and the blackness of the night, they searched their hearts, and with the mingled emotions of men facing the vast unknown they sang that glorious old Billy Sunday hymn,

'Where do we go from here, boys?
Where do we go from here?'"

The humor of homesickness makes no pretence, and is unashamed. A chap from Montana came up to the canteen counter behind which I stood, and said,

"Say, did you ever hear the story of the Statue of Liberty?" and I replied,

"Which one?"

He tipped his helmet forward, mocked me with a deep bow, and said,

"This one: A fellow had been started toward Davy Jones's locker three times by 'subs.' Finally he got a tub that made through connections; and, as he came up the harbor of 'little ol' Broadway,' he saw the 'Lady' standing up there and looking out through the mist, holding the lamp up to the window for him, and saying, 'Hello, kid; welcome home!' and he swallowed his Adam's apple, stood at attention, saluted, and said, 'Thank you, madam; I'm mighty glad to see you. But, if you ever see me again, *you'll have to turn around!*'"

[106]

He didn't wait for a laugh. He knew that the tale had "whiskers" and that many a man now old "had kicked the slats out of his cradle" in protesting against its resurrection. He hadn't told it to amuse me, but to "spill himself." But I laughed just the same, for it was richly done.

I watched the artist of the story as he proceeded to unlimber "Jenny," the fifteen-dollar talking-machine that stood in the far corner of the cellar in which this particular Y. M. C. A. canteen was located. No corner of that cellar was as far as thirty feet from any other corner. It was not more than sixteen hundred yards from our most advanced position, and directly in front of a great battery which just then was exchanging "calls" with the enemy. It sounded like a dozen Fourth of Julys outside, with cannon crackers and bombs not excluded.

The story-teller fingered through the records until he found the one his mood called for; then he removed his helmet to ease his weary head,—regulations allowed him to uncover while underground,—sat down on a biscuit-box directly in front of the sound-chamber, and, with his unshaven chin in his dirty, cracked hand, waited, close up, for the first word. There, in that old cellar under a ruined French chateau, I heard Alma Gluck sing "Little Gray Home in the West." She has sung it to vast multitudes in great halls, and to distinguished people in quiet parlors; she has set the world a-weeping with the exquisite pain of her song; but she never sang more effectively than she sang that night among the noisome odors of a dark dugout of the front line, with shrapnel and high explosives for an accompaniment and a homesick lad from Montana for her audience. [107]

What is the spirit of the trenches? It is the spirit of rare comradeship. *I never saw a man injure another man up there, or seek to.* Quarrels? *Sure!* and personal encounters now and then, but these are few and far between. There are little time and strength for them, of course, and there are few opportunities; but, when they do happen, they are differences of words that do not have two meanings and of fists that come through the open.

I have seen a man carry, in addition to his own kit, the entire equipment of another man who was suffering from gas. Three miles and a half, under the severest conditions of opening spring, through mud-filled trenches he walked with his double load, helping a man he had never seen before. [108]

In one of our companies were two Portuguese. One could not speak English. He was terribly dependent upon his "buddy." While I was with the battalion to which his company belonged, the "buddy" was killed. The distress of the man who did not understand the language of the country he loved and for whose just cause he had volunteered his all was most affecting. But how the other men of that company got about him! They swore that he should not have a single lonely minute. Indeed, they nearly ruined the chap with their kindness. They were in a fair way to destroy his stomach with their gifts and his constitution by their vigilance, which actually robbed him of sleep, when a wise-headed corporal took command of the situation and set them right.

It is this spirit of man's thoughtfulness for his brother, man's tenderness with man, that reassures me when I ask, "How will this stupendous man-hunt affect the heart of the race?" And the fighter is not unaware of the question. Indeed, he asks it himself. I heard a young major who was saying a farewell to a group of his friends at a church banquet in a Canadian city say,

"I go away determined, God helping me, to do my hardest duty; to render my country and the empire an enthusiastic and utmost service; and to carry myself so that when I come back, if I come back, *little children will run to me as confidently as they do now.*" [109]

What is the spirit of the trenches? It is the spirit of service that has no interrogation points. One night a shriek of agony came ringing back to our line from a listening-post in No Man's Land. A chaplain was "up," a Roman Catholic. He crawled down the shallow communicating trench to the wounded soldier, found him with a foot smashed by a grenade, unconscious, and bleeding to death. He stanchd the flow of blood as best he could, and somehow got the man back. And then, after the stretcher party had carried the "casualty" to the dressing-station, and while they waited for the ambulance, he prayed with the lad. A few days later he said to me, "I didn't think a Catholic's prayer would hurt a Protestant boy." And it was a Protestant padre, we are told, who ministered to the dying Major Redmond on a battle-field of Flanders.

There is no "grousing" in the trenches. I heard no complaints from men who were straining their vital forces to the utmost. It is great to hear them when they come out, though! How they do vent their spleen upon springs that are a bit uneven, these fellows who have been wallowing in mud and ice for days without a word in their misery! [110]

A runner came in one morning after thirty-six hours of continuous duty. He was chilled to the bone, and one foot was in bad shape. He had neither overcoat nor blankets; his entire equipment had been buried by the shelling incident to a raid. We leaned him against the great tea-boiler, and while he stood there warming his body we poured hot drinks into his stomach. Turning away for a moment, I was startled by a clatter behind me. There he was, his cup on the floor; he was dead asleep on his feet.

I have seen lads fall asleep on the rough boards of a Y. M. C. A. hut, with only the nondescript materials for covers that we could hastily throw over them. Not even the noises of great batteries, and of hundreds of soldiers passing in and out, disturbed them in the least.

Not a whimper, not a whisper of rebellion, came from them. Oh, I do not believe that I shall ever again complain about any hardship without despising myself. What a task we at home have, to be worthy of them!

There are so many tales of unalloyed courage, and so many to tell them well, that I have purposely committed this chapter largely to a very faulty pen-picture of another side of the spiritual portrait of the American soldier. His bravery is very prompt and very honest, and no soldier of the world is braver. He confesses his fear, which is not pretended; tells how fast he ran, [111]

how paralyzed his tongue was, how he caught himself saying, "Engine, engine number nine, running on Chicago line," or wiping his forehead with his revolver! But all the time he has not turned away from the line of duty by a single hair.

The type of his courage is unmistakable. It would be very poor form for an American to speak of this in any way that would make invidious comparisons, and to speak thus would insult the American soldier, who so thoroughly appreciates and so enthusiastically magnifies at his own expense the prowess of our allies who have done so much for us, who for four years have stood between us and destruction, and who even now must very largely teach us the modern art of national self-defence. "Private Peat" was of course over-enthusiastic in his praise, but he indicated a quality of bravery that I never failed to find in the American army in France when he said: "They are far ahead of the English and French in many ways. They are more active, more quick in thinking, and can decide in an instant what to do in battle. They have already made a wonderful record. Every allied soldier honors them." I saw the native genius of American fliers strikingly illustrated in an aviation contest between student fliers and their instructors. Every event—bomb-dropping, handling of machine guns, and trick flying—was won by the students. [112]

And the spirit of the trenches is not confined to those who stand in the mud of the trenches and experience their horrors. In Basingstoke, England, one night I sat with a queenly woman of seventy in front of a typical English grate fire. The war has taken much away from her; and, as she talked with such quiet determination and in tones so rich with suffering, she said, "*We* who have been in the trenches for nearly four years —"

Ah, yes, the women too have been in the farthest places of the line. The long vigils of the soldier in nights that promise only terror and in days that bring only hardship are not kept alone. The mothers of men, their wives, their sisters, and their sweethearts stand there too. And not only these, but the fathers and the brothers denied the privilege of bearing arms, but entering into the supreme ordeals of those who do bear them, by day and by night, in tense silence suffer in spirit the agonies which the bodies of their sons and brothers must experience at every station of the flaming trail that leads from the base to the far rim of No Man's Land.

In a city of Scotland one night I was introduced by the "provost," the mayor. He was quiet, but fully master of the situation. At the close of the meeting my host told me that the chairman who had presented me had that afternoon received a message informing him of the death in action of his third and last son. *The provost was in the trenches that night.* [113]

I have watched the long hospital trains pull into London stations during a "big push." I have seen the crowded ambulances dash by, and the dense crowds lining the streets. I have caught at the tightening of my throat when some grievously wounded man has waved a hand, or smiled, or wriggled a foot (if the arm was helpless) at the shouting multitude. And no less glorious has been the spirit of news-laddies who in rags and tatters have pressed their papers upon bandaged Tommies who were able to sit up—laddies from the submerged East Side, pauperizing themselves for a week because their hearts called them. And no less glorious than the spirit of these newsies has been the devotion of the flower-women, just as poor as the boys in "Cæsar's coin" and just as rich in true devotion, some of them in black with only memories to fill the chairs where strong men once sat—flower-women who, with tears in their eyes that for the soldiers' sake they *will not* shed, crowd about those wagons of mercy, showering the blanketed figures with primroses and daisies.

What is this spirit,—this spirit of laughter and of tears; this spirit that *goes* and that *stays*; this spirit that slays without becoming cruel and that turns, as the needle turns toward the pole, back again toward hardness and danger, choosing to walk the trench of death rather than to linger in the paths of life; this spirit that is both old and young, and that flourishes in the thin soil of poverty as luxuriantly as it blooms in the fields of the rich? [114]

It is the spirit that I found in the Gillespie home in Edinburgh. When the war came, there were two sons to add strength to the grace that two daughters brought to that fireside. Now the line runs out to the valley of the Somme, and ends there beneath the flowers of Flanders. Tom died in the rear-guard fighting from Mons to the Marne. Bey fell at the head of his men in a charge on the twenty-fifth of September, 1915. Tom's oars (he was captain of the Oxford eight) hang in the hall and his picture at the left of the mantel in the library. Bey, whose letters to his mother have been published as "Letters from Flanders," was the finest scholar turned out by Oxford in a generation. His picture hangs just across the mantel from that of his brother.

In that room we sat and discussed the mighty advance just then at its height; the possibility of its reaching the Channel ports, capturing Paris, overrunning France, separating the British and French armies. We discussed the *worst!* And then they said, they who had laid so rich an offering upon the altar of liberty:

"Back against the shores of this island the British fleet will stand and hold, hold while America brings up the reserves of civilization. *They shall not pass! They shall not pass!*" [115]

What is this spirit? I found it everywhere. The very stones of France cried out with its voices; the shattered trees of the forest were the strings of a harp that sang with it; the eyes of the smallest child were filled with it; and aged men in the fields, and gray-haired women pushing carts through the streets of the cities, were monuments to it that cathedral-levelling shells could not destroy.

As a troop-train pulled out of a great station in Paris late one afternoon, I saw a sight that will always remain with me as one of the most appealing and suggestive pictures of this war. Perhaps five hundred people were standing on the platform, saying a last good-by to their loved ones and

friends bound for the hungry front. With hands outreaching and faces in the sun they stood in a great tableau of farewell as we drew slowly away. And as I looked into the profound depths of those faces, I was swept by a torrent of emotion that left me a changed man. They, and millions of others they represent, are the fathers and mothers, the sisters, wives, sweethearts, brothers, and friends of unnumbered and never-to-return young men. All have felt the agony of this war's separations and loss, have poured out their treasure and their blood. We cannot speak for them, we who only now begin to enter into their suffering. But we can speak for ourselves; we can deliver our own souls.

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We too have been in this war since 1914, but until a few months ago France and Britain fought our battles for us. As surely as the principles for which we now fight, and our American ideals and liberties, were governing facts with us four years ago, so surely the same misgoverned power that threatens them now threatened them then. The British fleet in the North Sea, the British Tommy in the trenches of Flanders, and the soldiers of France, have made the wall of iron and the dike of flesh and bone against the flood of autocracy and absolutism that otherwise would have broken through to engulf Europe, America, and the world.

The United States is forever in the debt of those who for unspeakable months held the lines against the day of her arrival. What we do, and all that we can do, will not be an unmerited investment from the standpoint of those peoples who, war-weary and impoverished, yet hold fast. As for ourselves, it is the price of our progress and of our very life.

He is less than a loyal American and he is without the knowledge of gratitude who speaks with a slight of the allies of his country. The broken men in London's streets, the cripples by the Seine, the armless lads who wear the badge of far-away Australia, the bandaged ones from New Zealand and the maimed from Canada, leave me blinded with my tears of pride and acknowledgment. The wide-eyed women of Brittany in their simple black, and the children so strangely quiet, the matrons of England, Italy, Ireland, and Wales, and their sisters in the Highlands and Lowlands of Scotland, whose unshed tears are like lost rivers, tell me of my debt, America's debt.

[117]

And let us not forget the plight of Serbia and Montenegro, the complete agony of Roumania. If our war is just and if Justice never forgets, then the United States will not remain a nation long enough to lose from her memory the travail of these hapless people to whom all is now lost but honor. And nothing that Russia, Russia betrayed by those of her own household and destroyed by an unscrupulous enemy—nothing that Russia does now or fails to do hereafter will wipe from the page of history the imperishable glory of her *six million sons* dead or maimed, who, inadequately equipped and hopelessly led, were fed in Freedom's name to the ruthless god of war.

To-day Democracy has become as one nation; thus she stands or falls. The far-bending line behind Mt. Kemmel and in front of Amiens, and every line that shall confront Imperial Germany until autocracy has been finally conquered, is *our* line. It is not four thousand miles away, and there is no ocean between it and us. It runs through the *heart* of the United States and of Canada. Those who hold it with their backs against the wall of destiny, whether they fight beneath the Union Jack, the tricolor of France, or the Stars and Stripes, are soldiers of the Republic.

[118]

This spirit of gratitude and understanding is the spirit of the American trenches, for in them are Americans who have entered into the sufferings of a world that loves liberty enough to give the best, the last, and all, to preserve it. I found no boasting in our trenches; men did not say, "We have come to win the war." They said with an all-convincing earnestness, "We have come to *help win the war*." And now *behind our* trenches are fathers and mothers and friends; these too have entered into this vast fellowship of pain, and they too *begin to know*.

More eloquently than any words of mine can describe it the verses of Private William I. Grundish, Company C of the U. S. Engineers, A. E. F.,—verses which first appeared in the Paris edition of *The New York Herald*,—have given a voice to the soul of the American soldier. Private Grundish called the poem

FACING THE SHADOWS.

[119]

"When I behold the tense and tragic night
Shrouding the earth in vague, symbolic gloom,
And when I think that ere my fancy's flight
Has reached the portals of the inner room
Where knightly ghosts, guarding the secret ark
Of brave romance, through me shall sing again,
Death may engulf me in eternal dark,—
Still I have no regret nor poignant pain.
Better in one ecstatic, epic day
To strike a blow for Glory and for Truth,
With ardent, singing heart to toss away
In Freedom's holy cause my eager youth,
Than bear, as weary years pass one by one,
The knowledge of a sacred task undone."

Lieutenant Dinsmore Ely was killed in France in the aviation service on April 21, 1918. On April 29 his father, Dr. James O. Ely of Winnetka, Ill., received a letter from him written just before his death. The letter ends thus:

"And I want to say in closing, If anything should happen to me, let's have no mourning in spirit or in dress. Like a Liberty Bond, it is an investment, not a loss, when a man dies for his country. It is

an honor to a family, and is that the time for weeping?"

"*It is an investment, not a loss, when a man dies for his country.*" Here is the spirit of the trenches: it is the spirit that cries, "With this I give myself." It is *sacrifice*, and sacrifice is the spirit of victory.

CHAPTER X

[120]

THE GREATEST MOTHER IN THE WORLD

I saw her first in a great base hospital in the north of England. Her ward was filled with wounded British soldiers. In writing of her one hesitates to use the only word in the language of our race that expresses the adoration of those young heroes as their eyes companioned her from cot to cot. One hesitates to use the word because it has been associated with so many small and trifling things, because it has become such a commonplace. But it is the only word: they *worshipped* her.

What I saw in their eyes that day I have seen in my mother's eyes as she arose from prayer; I saw it once in the eyes of a battle-widow kneeling before a shrine in Paris; I caught a glimpse of it in the eyes of my son when, leaning against the cradling embrace of his mother's arms, he looked for an instant with a baby's questioning into his mother's face; I beheld it in supernatural glory near the fortress city of Toul when a soldier of my country, a lad in years but a veteran in sacrifice, in the delirium of his suffering whispered that name which is above all other names in the vocabulary of the dying. It is not the tribute of either sex exclusively, nor of any particular age; it is the supreme testimony of the human soul, and to those who behold it a fleeting glimpse of the things that are "hid with Christ in God."

[121]

This woman was not old, and she was not young. Her hair was white, and her cheeks were the vivid hue of her native land. She was not beautiful by the artist's test, but it is seldom given to any one to study a more attractive face. A stranger would always see first and remember last her eyes and her mouth; why, I cannot say, for as I write I find it impossible to describe them. She was just above the medium in height, athletic of figure; and she moved about with the unhurried swiftness of the born nurse.

But the impression she left upon me was not the impression of one who deftly, tenderly cares for the sick and the injured. When my eyes fell upon her, and as they followed her, and when I turned away from the great hospital, I thought of my own mother. Now, although I am writing of her, the face that rises before me is not her face; it is my mother's face.

She stopped presently by a bed that held a fearfully broken lad from London's great East Side. In half a dozen places the shrapnel had sought his vitals, and quite as many times the kindly cruel scalpel of the surgeon had searched out the creeping poison. The foot of the bed was raised so that the bandaged head was inches below the level of the tired feet. When she touched the boy, he smiled. He could not see her,—his eyes were covered,—and he could not move his head. Even the smile must have cost him pain. But I never knew before that a man's mouth could be so beautiful. It was as if the lips had responded to something electric in that white-gowned woman's touch; it was as if her fingers had healing in them, as if her hands bore the same divine ministries that the hands of the Galilean carried to the halt and lame and blind nineteen hundred years before. I found myself whispering, "And the child was cured from that very hour."

[122]

I saw her next in France and not far behind the lines, and I saw, in the eyes of the men she ministered to there, what I had seen in England. I never learned her story. Somehow I never cared to know it; I never inquired. Once when a chaplain started to tell me, I stopped him. I knew that it would be brave and beautiful; but the war has many stories, and we must save our dreams. I prefer to remember her in the spirit of the words of one her hands were laid upon: "I wonder what she did before she went to war—for she has gone to war as truly as any soldier. I am sure in the peaceful years she must have loved and been greatly loved. Perhaps *he* was killed out there. Now she is ivory-white with over-service, and spends all her days in loving. She will not spare herself. Her eyes,—ah! her eyes,—they have the old frank, comprehending look of her yesterdays; but they are ringed with being weary. Only her lips hold a touch of the old color. Over dying men she stoops, and is to them the incarnation of their mother or of the woman, had they lived, they would have loved."

[123]

I saw her first in England and then in France. I shall not see her again. In the air a winged monster paused and let loose his fury. *She is not dead, but gone to her coronation.* She lives today in the hearts of ten times ten thousand women and thousands more, this greatest mother in the world.

I came one bitter night in February into the crowded, dirty station at Toul. One of my travelling companions was a lieutenant of the "Rainbow Division," who hailed from Marion, O., and who talked a lot about his wife and baby. His head was clean-shaven, "because," he said, "kerosene was expensive and hard to procure!"

On the same train with us were a dozen Red Cross nurses transferring to a new base hospital.

They were wonderful girls. Until morning brought the cars that were to carry them on to their destination nearer the line they sat on their blanket-rolls. While they waited, they sang "Keep the Home Fires Burning," "Over There"; and they sang the old songs, "Kentucky Home," "Swanee River," "Tenting To-night on the Old Camp-Ground"; and they sang some of the hymns that have body and distinction and that last, "Rock of Ages," "Nearer, My God, to Thee," "Lead, Kindly Light"; the "Marseillaise" was sung again and again, while we all stood, and "The Star-Spangled Banner." The night rang with their voices. [124]

During the informal concert a French troop-train pulled in, and the poilus tumbled out. They heard the singing; and, although they could not understand the words of the songs, they caught the spirit of the singers. Like statues they stood leaning upon their long guns and listening to those women of a far land brought near by the ministry of a common pain. About us were the high-piled sand-bags that re-enforced the abris (shelters) conveniently placed for a quick retreat in case of an air raid. Only a few very faint lights were shown. But the faces of those French soldiers seemed to build a warming fire on the station platform, and the choir lighted a candle that did not burn out. It was a night never to be forgotten.

Wonderful is woman, this woman of war!

"The bravest battle that ever was fought,
Shall I tell you where and when?
On the maps of the world you will find it not;
'Twas fought by the mothers of men."

And this woman of war is the woman of work. As, in the brave days of old, woman, free of spirit as she was free of limb, carried the extra weapons of her mate into the heart of the conflict, and inspired him to superhuman deeds, bearing equal share with him in the front of battle, so the woman of to-day, for the first time in long generations given equal freedom with man to do the world's work, has sprung to the side of her mate. In the factories of England, in the fields of Russia, in the mills and mines of France, on the firing line itself, and in the Red Cross behind every bloody trench of the war-mad world, she is giving herself, body, mind, and soul, for the preservation of the institutions of her people. [125]

I have seen her pushing her cart through the streets of Rennes and Tours, bearing great loads down the highways of Brittany, tilling fields with the first glimpse of spring, close behind the lines. She is in all places, for her tasks are the tasks of the universal need.

But England gave me my best opportunity to study carefully the woman of work. A girl sold me my ticket at Liverpool; another took it. A girl gathered the baggage together at the Paddington station in London. Young women were at the desk of the hotel—not a man in sight anywhere. Women are conductors on the London trams and guards as well as ticket-sellers in the tubes. I saw them doing the heaviest labor of canal-boats and harbor tugs. They were ploughing in the country and driving munition-vans in the cities. In one of the greatest shell-factories I saw scores of young women at lathes, and other scores managing intricate machinery with deftness and precision. What price the next generation will pay for these strained bodies—some of the loads are necessarily heavy ones—I do not know, but womanhood asks no questions when the voice of sacrifice calls. [126]

One is impressed by the number of wedding-rings worn by the women of work; thousands of wives, yes, and widows, of soldiers are serving Britain in these new ways. Many must add their earnings to the scant home store, and so the babies are cared for by grandparents or public nurseries while the mothers labor for the cause the father fights for or may have died for. In munition-factories matrons are provided who look after the interests of the younger girls. Of course, grave moral problems are arising from these new and complicated relations of women to the world that has for so long been man's world exclusively. These problems will not be solved in a day.

After three years of war 4,766,000 women were employed in England, or 1,421,000 more than were employed in 1914. The number of women workers is increasing at the rate of 18,000 every week. The Minister of Munitions announces that from "sixty to eighty per cent of the machine work on shells, fuses, and trench-warfare supplies is now performed by women. They have been trained in aëroplane-manufacture, gun-work, and in almost every other branch of manufacture." [127]

In a statement made later, in the House of Commons, the Minister of Munitions referred to the fact that nearly one thousand large guns were destroyed or captured, and between four and five thousand machine guns destroyed or captured, in the great German offensive which began on the twenty-first of March, 1918, and that in this same period the ammunition lost amounted to about the total production of from one to three weeks. But he declared that the loss had been more than made up in less than one month, and that nine-tenths of the huge output of shells which was then sufficient for the continuation of an intensive battle throughout the summer was due to the labor of three-quarters of a million women.

I heard a great iron-merchant say: "Ah! sir, the women are saving the country. When I myself urged a holiday upon them,—and not in a year have they taken one,—they said: 'What will our men at the front do when we stop? Will the Germans sit back and rest too? We will have our holiday when the war is over and the lads come home.'" [128]

She was just a slip of a girl; but she smiled at the baby boy in her arms, and said, "His father is in

France." She continued: "This is my first day with him in ten months. He is asleep when I get home at night, and he is asleep in the morning when I leave for the shop." And she smiled again as she added: "O, he is a fine sleeper, sir, and the ladies at the church [referring to the nursery] have no trouble with him. It is good, though, to have him in my arms with his eyes open." And, though I blinked my eyes hard as I looked at this brave English girl having an enforced vacation from shell-making because of "back-strain," she had no tears in her eyes.

And in excess of all that her hands find to do, as when Spartan mothers sent their sons away and with the same spirit, Democracy's woman of work is giving her flesh and her blood to be food for the carrion-birds of countries she has never seen, while still beneath her heart she carries the developing life that is the hope of the future.

I saw a great parade in London, one hundred thousand women marching in a vast demonstration after the triumph of suffrage—mothers, wives, sisters, and sweethearts, little daughters dressed in white, and gray-haired battle-widows of the Crimea. The faces of the marchers were inspiring, but my eyes did not rest upon them. I looked longest at the black masses of men and boys crowding close against the lines that kept the street open for the parade. To the eternal credit of manhood let it be said that the faces of the men were generally faces of old men and that the faces of the boys were the faces of children.

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But I saw more than the crowd of men and boys. On those faces I saw the light of discovery, and I seemed to hear a voice, a voice that speaks down through the years from a Roman cross, "Behold thy mother." The clamor of the unparalleled conflict has been the quiet in which for the first time woman's cry for justice has been really heard and fully understood.

Great Britain, the butt of our jokes because of her stolid slowness and stubbornness in an opinion or tradition, saw her window-smashers turn to munition-makers, saw her social butterflies don the garb of Red Cross nurses, saw her women rise to help win the war; and Great Britain was convinced.

And what have we found this "new woman," this woman of war, to be? First of all, we have discovered that she is not new; that she is the woman of old, the woman of yesterday, to-day, and forever.

But, while woman has not changed, her times have; and with intelligent heroism she is fighting against fearful odds, to adjust the machinery of society to meet modern needs. One has declared that already three-fourths of woman's former sphere has slipped away from her. Back at the beginnings of the race she was in all things partner of the man. She not only bore children and reared them; she was armor-bearer as well, tent-maker, planter, tender, and reaper of the harvests.

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But gradually changes came. Men no longer spent all of their time in fighting or preparing to fight. They began to relieve women in the fields and to assume more and more the heavier portion of building-operations. Women found more time for the nursery and kitchen, for the loom and spinning-wheel.

As civilization progressed, still fewer men went away to battle, and war became less frequent. Minds with leisure became inventive, and machinery simplified household labors. Even the nursery was invaded; for the cry was no longer, "Give me sons, many sons," but, "Give me fit sons," and the honor in mere numbers in childbearing gave way to the distinction of quality as well.

Then, too, the home itself reached out beyond the pioneer clearing which formerly held all of its activities, until its interests became identified with all the problems of a society no longer bounded by family, village, tribal, or even racial lines. It is as unreasonable to insist that women in their social and political relations to-day remain as they were before the advent of the public bakery, the tailor-shop, the candy-kitchen, the public school, and the legalized saloon as it would be to insist that they go back to the spinning-wheel or that they assume again as a normal occupation the hod-carrying of the builder.

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Civilization faces a female ultimatum to-day. Ah, more than that, it is a racial ultimatum; for effete women produce their kind, and final racial standards are fixed in the womb. This is the ultimatum: *Parasite or partner?*

Woman must be admitted on equal terms to participation in all activities of modern society, or she must occupy an ever-narrowing sphere that will crowd her at last to the soft couch of voluptuous idleness, where Roman splendor waned and Grecian greatness died.

Do you say that woman's sphere is in the home? Because I so believe I am intensely concerned that she shall find no barred doors anywhere that open to knowledge and power which will make her more competent in her paramount task of motherhood. For the sake of the future we must not consent to send woman into the social arena short of being fully armed.

Woman is to-day following the unerring sex instinct that warns her to keep always by the side of her mate. Her cry for political freedom is a plea for and a movement toward a fuller understanding, a more blessed helpfulness, between husband and wife, mother and son, male and female. *Those who grow not together, grow apart.*

I have seen towering trees fall before the joined cuttings of two axe-men who, working together, with blow following blow, hewed to the heart of the monarch of the forest. I have seen a giant workman laying the bricks of a city pavement, with his left and right hands toiling in perfect unison and with almost incredible rapidity. In the crash of a great line drive on the gridiron I have felt the swaying of the human mass in deadlock, and then the impact of the reserve from the

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back field that has destroyed the balance and forced the ball over the line.

Just as the tree falls slowly before the attack of a single axe-man, just as the paving waits on a "one-handed" layer of bricks, just as the gridiron struggle remains undecided until it has felt the drive of the reserve back, so society waits to-day on the fulness of the strength of womanhood.

For the times that are to come with the close of the war we must now prepare; for the reforms that will be possible then, for that mighty new dispensation of social justice, we must doubly arm ourselves. No resources of power available for the world programme of peace, sobriety, economic freedom, and democracy, dare be overlooked. Hear the female ultimatum to the race: *a drag or a lift, a plaything or a mate, a parasite or a partner.*

CHAPTER XI

THE FIRST CROIX DE GUERRE

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A sentinel barred our way. "Can't take the 'bus' in for half an hour yet." Barnes turned to me, and said, "Shall we walk or wait?" We left the car for the driver to bring up when the failing light would make his journey safer, and hiked up the road.

We had been stopped at the edge of the woods between the third and second lines, half a mile from a little village that marked the point within the second line which was our immediate destination. Machines were not allowed beyond the cover of the trees before dark. A few yards above the sentinel who had challenged us the road came under the eye of German observers.

Ten minutes of brisk walking brought us to the second line. There had been a great air fight, with eighteen planes in action, only a few hours before; and three Germans had been dropped. An anti-aircraft gun manned by the French was so carefully camouflaged that even when standing within ten feet of the spot where it raised itself unhurriedly out of the earth to go into action, one was quite unaware of its presence.

Barnes, an old-time Endeavorer from Ohio, whose business in Cleveland was big, and who brings to the generalship of a front-line Y. M. C. A. division a genius for leadership and a personality that make him a marked man, was in a hurry to be off. A mile and a half of open country lay between us and the most advanced "75's." In front of these was the military road along which were scattered the several ruined villages we must visit before returning to headquarters.

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The "front line," by the way, is not a string without thickness; from batteries to the most advanced trench it is a mile deep at least. The great battle highway, in front of the hidden guns that are the most exact engines of death the war has developed, is screened carefully from the enemy to cover the passing of trains and men. From it deep communicating trenches run down to battalion and company headquarters, the dugouts, the reserve trenches, the machine-gun nests, and the "laterals" that stretch away for miles facing Germany.

The gray of a February evening, whose heavy sky completely hid the sunset, was our protection as we left the second line behind us and swung with long strides across the open. Then, too, we were nearly three miles from enemy trenches, and by the time we had come to closer quarters it would be pitch-dark.

Not a fence or a hedge broke the monotony of that vast open space. Abandoned trenches, that in a need could be quickly made war-fit, scarred it in all directions, and shell-holes pocked it thickly. Almost I thought myself again in the dead season of late fall upon the high plateaus of Montana or Wyoming. These craters, the old ones, were not unlike the ancient buffalo-wallows of the West; and the tangled, heavy grass, undisturbed for three plantings, reminded me of the dried virgin turf of my own country.

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But I got no farther with my comparisons; the sounds in the air and the huge noises in the not-too-remote distance, where the earth rose in volcanic eruptions to meet the sky, were unlike any range voices I had ever heard. Across this plateau of France Death has herded his flocks, and here have been gathered some of his bloodiest harvests.

We steered our course by the "farm" described to us by the men on the second line. It was a jumbled ruin overhung with vines, kindly vines that tried to hide great wounds. A bicycle courier, speeding back with messages, set us right again when we lost our way in the deepening darkness; but it was black night when we entered our first objective on the great road.

A private directed us to the officers' mess. Winding in and out among the shattered buildings, we threaded our way to an old bomb-proof. As I came out of the night, even the flicker of the candles in the dark, cellar-like room blinded me. When my vision cleared, I saw approaching me a young officer who had risen from the head of the table; he was the "town major," the officer in charge of the village. With his hands he made a vise and gripped my shoulders, as he said, like one in a dream, "Poling, what are you doing here?" and, reaching back a half-dozen years, I cried, "*Pat!*" It was Lieutenant Robert C. Patterson, of Huntington, Ind.,—but it was not as "Lieutenant Patterson" that I addressed him.

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We met first at a young people's conference at Winona Lake. He was president of the Christian Endeavor society and teacher of a Sunday-school class in the Presbyterian church at home, an exceptionally alert and vigorous young man. Out under the trees early one morning we talked

about the gravest problem a man ever faces, "Where shall I put my life?" Since those days at Winona Lake I had not seen him. He had experienced many changes, enlisting at twenty-one, three years before our meeting in France; and, when the challenge of a vast military need had become unmistakable to him, he had seen service first at Panama. Later he had been assigned to duty at home; and in July, 1917, his eager eyes were among the first in our expeditionary army to see the shores of bleeding, glorious France. His advancement had been rapid, from private to sergeant, and from sergeant to a commission. He was wearing the silver bar of a first lieutenant when we gripped each other "over there," but before I saw again the lights off Sandy Hook—and my return was not long delayed after our meeting—he was made a captain. [137]

We did not eat. In his billet we sat on his bunk and talked. We travelled fast and far in a few minutes. Things and times had changed since we last talked together by the quiet lake in Indiana, but some things never change; we talked about those things that are the same yesterday, to-day, and forever.

But Barnes was becoming impatient; there were long miles to go yet, and much work was to be done. The machine had arrived and was waiting, and machines look better under way than parked on the line.

"Pat" said a few things quietly, and then opened his tunic and took out of a deep pocket a well-worn leather case. In it was the first Croix de Guerre given by the French government to an American officer after the entry of the United States into the war. With it was the official citation telling of the high courage and determination which won the coveted cross of honor. "Take it back; deliver it in person," he said.

You have not forgotten the story of the first little affair suffered by Americans in the trenches, the story of the barrage, the trench raid, the taking of three prisoners, and the offering of America's first strong lives upon the altar of freedom. You will never forget the young officer who in that "violent bombardment," when communications were cut and re-enforcements held back, conquered the shell-fire to make his report, and then "carried on" until the black morning was over. America's first Croix de Guerre never left its place by the side of my passport and movement orders, pressed close against my body, until the last inch of treacherous Atlantic was behind me. [138]

But to me it speaks of the *other soldier*, not the one I left out there by the battle road under the shell-illuminated sky of St. Mihiel, not the one in muddy uniform with the old-young face of a veteran and the insignia of the army of the republic; but that other soldier who gave his heart's full allegiance to the Captain of the great salvation, and who now, in the far, stern place his quest of richer, fuller life has called him to, keeps the faith. As these lines are being written, there lies before me a letter from the mother of Captain Patterson; and in it I read, "It was through his interest in our local Christian Endeavor society that he became a member of the church when he was thirteen years old."

Out from the International Headquarters of the Christian Endeavor movement floats a service flag with 140 stars upon it, and every star represents 1,000 men—140,000 young Endeavorers now with the colors in France or in training-camps preparing to go—140,000 young men from the churches of the United States who have not "failed to hear the call of highest patriotism." Long ere these words will find themselves upon the printed page the 140,000 will have become 150,000, and, if the end of this red pilgrimage be not soon reached, the three hundred thousand Endeavorers of military age, and their as yet uncounted brothers, will have found their places in the trenches or behind them, and on the ships of the sea. [139]

How quickly they came! From my own local union six officers enlisted within a few weeks; before I left for France twenty-three State presidents, active or past, were in training; and a great city union, that of Des Moines, found itself without a young man left on the executive committee. Within the first year of the war Illinois and Ohio recorded more than five Christian Endeavorers in service for every society. A census of Camp Hancock taken in early December, 1917, revealed the fact that ten per cent of the men in training there at that time were Christian Endeavorers.

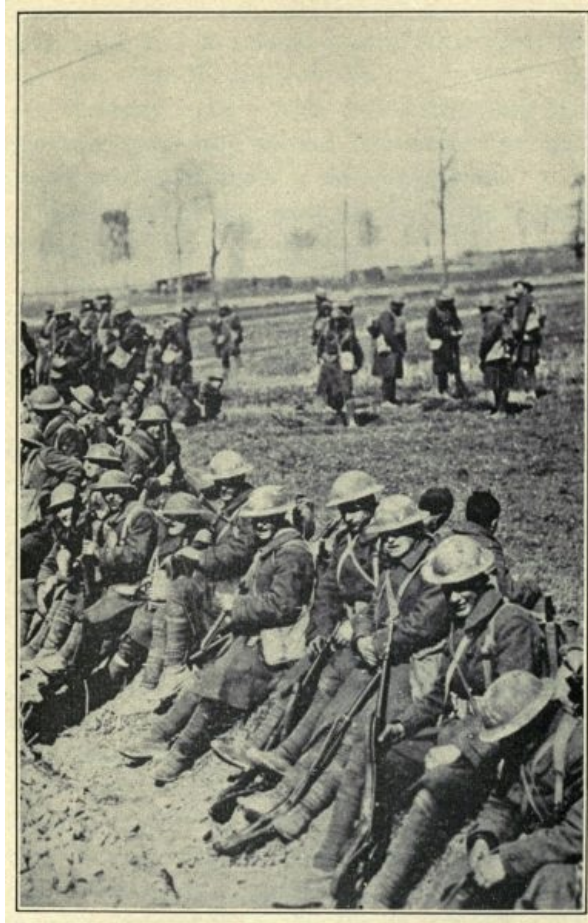
On no day in France did I look in vain for Christian Endeavorers, and no group that I met there was so small that it did not contain them. My visit with Patterson that night was only the beginning, or rather it was a high point, in a day of continuous Christian Endeavor fellowship. In every Y. M. C. A. hut I was greeted by Christian Endeavorers under helmets and with gas-masks, at attention. What a fine little group that was from Maine! And then there was the brother of a president of the Oklahoma union. [140]

In one "hut," after the gas-warning which came while I was speaking had been recalled, a Christian Endeavorer took me to the rise from which an exceptional view of the flares from the guns could be seen. The night was crowded with great trucks bearing supplies and ammunition along the midnight roads. Without lights, and forbidden to use their horns, those unsung, unseen heroes crept along, passing files of soldiers, soldiers marching in and soldiers marching out, facing the risk of the shells that death drops suddenly from the sky to open chasms in the way or to strew horses and men in wide windrows under the ghostly trees. And on many a high seat and behind many a truck-wheel I found my brethren that night.

In another hut I was greeted by William E. Sweet, former president of the Colorado union. He sat on a cracker-box, and told me that Christian Endeavor made him, that he is president of the Young Men's Christian Association in Denver, that he is in France, that he is all that he is trying to be as a Christian, under God, because of Christian Endeavor.

At ten o'clock that night we turned off the main road, and in a dense growth came upon the last

hut within the zone of constant shell-fire. It was strangely quiet. After heavy knocking the door was cautiously opened, and a familiar face peered out at us above a flickering candle.



AMERICAN INFANTRY RESTING, APPROACHING THE FRONT IN FRANCE

From a photograph copyrighted by the Committee on Public Information. From Underwood & Underwood, N. Y.

"Early to bed and early to rise?" questioned Barnes.

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"No," a big voice replied. "Nothing doing here to-night. The boys are all up on the line. Looks like a 'party.' They were ordered away early and in a hurry."

While he spoke, the chap with the candle had been inspecting me, and introductions were hardly begun before we knew each other; it was Rev. Mr. Sykes, formerly president of the Minnesota Christian Endeavor union, and as vigorous a Christian as ever demonstrated the manhood of the Master. There in the woods I left him under a sky whose paths are crowded with iron messengers of death, making a little bit of heaven for hundreds of men who tread daily the places of a man-made hell.

Our pace was more rapid now; we ran with lights from the last hut. In twenty minutes we were in brigade headquarters, where in the morning we had registered and secured our passes. I thought again of the major who in arranging our papers had shown attention to certain details that concerned the safety and comfort of the private soldier. His consideration had particularly impressed me. Democracy differs from Autocracy in more ways than one when she goes to war.

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Brigade headquarters was just out of the zone of shell-fire—not that guns of large caliber could not have reached it, but the German front opposite it had thus far been satisfied with visiting aërial bombardments upon it. Half a dozen open mines behind the village testified to the poor aim but clear intention of an aviator who the day before had sought to destroy its warehouses.

As we drew away from the slumbering but well-guarded town, off at the right, dimly outlined against the swelling bosom of the hill, I saw white crosses. With arms outreaching they stood above our new-made graves. In the distance could still be heard the voices of the guns, and the leaden sky grew rosy where the great shells broke.

We were only a few minutes late for our midnight supper. I pulled off my mud-laden boots in a daze. I had lived, it seemed, a thousand years in fifteen hours. What a Christian Endeavor tour it had been! Into a dozen States it had carried me, and back to a hundred choice and stirring memories. I crept into my blankets with a mixture of emotions no mortal can analyze, but in it was unspeakable gratitude to the blessed boys who are the supermen of our American citizenship, the torch-bearers of civilization, the road-makers of Christian peace.

THE HYMN OF HATE

"Saw a Dutchman to-day, saw him from here up."

The speaker indicated with his hands that part of a man's body between hips and head.

"You know I'm a pretty good shot. Didn't see him again."

Pause.

"Do you know what I've been thinking ever since? I've been hoping he isn't in my fix; I hope he doesn't have a wife and kid."

The red-headed sergeant from Boston was the spokesman—a sharpshooter and a fluent user of Sunday-school language—in his own lurid way. It was night, and he had been hanging around for some time waiting his chance to "spill himself." I shall forget all of my own speeches, but never his. I was moved too deeply for words. I stuck my hand out, and said, "Put her there!" and he understood.

I heard no hymn of hate on our line in France. I saw prisoners of war treated like men; they had fought like men, our fellows said. I saw wounded prisoners brought out with every consideration and care. And as the result of a raid that came over early in March a German captain of infantry lies by the side of an American captain of infantry. He was buried with military honors. Why? That was the question I asked, and the answer I received was a look of surprise. [144]

Modern warfare has not changed the traditions of American arms. I say that there is no hymn of hate on the American front in France. There will be desperate deeds a-plenty. In the outpouring of passions men will become the instruments of appalling vengeance. War is not pretty. Americans will not lightly regard a crucifixion, and they will punish treachery. Atrocities will have their own reward. *Men* cannot sing songs of peace while handless babies cry in pain before their eyes, and girls big with child name their despoilers. It is not difficult to be charitable with those who have seen so much and suffered so greatly, when they for the moment use the only weapon their foe seems to value and to fear.

But the programme of the army has no hymn of hate. Its spirit is the spirit of punishing wrath without malice; its thrust is not for man, but for a system; it looks upon its foes with even pity and regret while it abhors and hates and destroys the power that makes them bloody pawns.

I listened one evening to the address of a one-armed French colonel. He had been left for dead before Verdun. Thirty-six hours he lay in the open, suffering the tortures of a living, earth-born hell. He said: [145]

"The German 'Hymn of Hate' saved Paris. Down across Belgium the gray barbarians came, thrust forth by a philosophy of 'Might makes right' and believing that terrorizing a people will conquer its will to resist. They gave their bayonets an extra twist and lingered with them to be cruel; *they lost seconds*. In the market-places of Louvain they dishonored women and girls; *they lost minutes*. They butchered hostages, and left the scars of rapine and murder upon the cities of Flanders and Picardy; *they lost hours*.

"France had her chance! Britain came! When we turned, we had no time to hate, no time for the extra bayonet-thrust. We saw no individual German. It was for France! We heard her cry in the weeping of our women; she spoke to us from her fields watered with the blood of our brothers. Vive la France! Vive la France!"

I learned as a lad that to master another, or to master a task, one must first be master of himself. Once in a great football contest I saw a college defeated because her captain and star tackle was goaded into slugging by the constant "dirty work" of the lesser man opposing him. I felt at the time that the blow which knocked the unfair player into the mud with a streaming, broken nose was less than he deserved, but that same blow put my hero out of the game.

I have a book, the supreme ethical, moral, and religious volume of all time. In it is written that he who treasures an evil passion in his heart, or allows it residence in his soul, is by so much less than the man he might be. No hater can be at the height of his possible efficiency in physical strength, in moral courage, or in spiritual stamina. In the long run a nation loses power in proportion as her system of faith disregards moral values. [146]

Germany has temporarily changed the map of Europe, but unless God contradicts Himself she is farther from triumph to-day than she was when her legions stood before Liège. No long-distance gun from Krupps' can outrange the truth.

"The German 'Hymn of Hate' saved Paris." Yes, and it will be written at the end, "The German 'Hymn of Hate' saved America and the world." It was not the "Star-Spangled Banner," that hymn of unsullied glory, that sent America marching out of her isolation into the slaughter-plains of Europe; it was the "Hymn of Hate," the hymn of submarines and Zeppelins, of poison gas and unnumbered atrocities, the hymn that mingled with its chorus the cooing of infants about to drown and the screams of women about to suffer the greater death.

What Britain and France and Russia and America, perhaps, could not have done, Germany has done herself.

But is this system of faith practical from the standpoint of the individual, the individual who has suffered, suffered in his own body and in the flesh of those dearer to him than his own life, the tortures of hell? I have visited in scores of British homes of mourning, and have generally found [147]

the fulfilment of the promise, "As thy days, so shall thy strength be."

In Cooke's Presbyterian Church, Toronto, Canada, one Sunday morning of November, 1916, I listened to a sermon preached by Rev. Mr. McGaw, then assistant to Dr. William Patterson. Mr. McGaw later became pastor of a church in Montreal. He is as Irish as his name suggests. His own family has been in France from the beginning; when the sermon to which I refer was delivered, two brothers were lying in hospitals, wounded. At the close of the service Mr. McGaw prayed; and, as he prayed, I found myself in a sweat of amazement. He said:

"Our Father, thou knowest that we do not pray for the triumph of German arms; we pray for the destruction of the power that has wasted the world, for the despoiling of the ruthless despoiler, for the toppling of the last crown of autocracy, and that the last throne of militarism shall be tumbled down. But, our Father, as we pray for our own who suffer, for our wounded brethren, for our dying comrades, for our widowed and our orphaned and our bereft, we pray for the sufferers of the enemy."

By my side that morning sat a returned Canadian soldier with blinded eyes. As I lifted my head after the prayer, I looked into the face of my friend who had made so great a sacrifice, and his face was illumined by a "light that never was on sea or land." I was wrong. McGaw was right. [148]

The Christian must not forget whose he is and whom he serves, even though the vindication of righteousness seems afar off and tardy. He must, for the sake of his country as well as for the demonstration of the faith committed to him, be a "doer of the word." He must so speak now that when the war is over he will not be ashamed.

That the soldier does not expect to find the "Hymn of Hate" in the pulpit, and is resentful when he hears it there, is at least suggested by a paragraph from a letter in "Letters from Flanders," written by Lieutenant Bey Gillespie, one of the earlier martyrs of the war, a Scotch lad of brilliant promise, whose happy part it was to speak, in speaking his own heart, for hundreds of thousands of other British youths less able than he to make vocal the quests and questionings of their souls:

"Personally I do not care for a mixture of the two styles; and when the cleric says, 'Please God the Germans will take it in the neck,' it makes me wriggle in my chair and feel uncomfortable all down my back. However, when he left our German enemies alone and got to those others with whom a bishop is more particularly concerned, he was very good; and I think the men enjoyed him, for it was something quite new to most of them." [149]

In the London *Times*, March 15, 1918, appeared a remarkable letter from a British officer who had shortly before reached a convalescent home in Holland after three and one-half years' imprisonment in Germany. It was a ringing protest against the agitation of the pacifists in Parliament and a calm but intense arraignment of the "Landsdowne letter," which had appeared only a short time before. But, wonderful as was the letter itself, the spirit in which it was written was even more wonderful. The concluding paragraph is as follows:

"Unless Germany is beaten in the field we cannot win this war. Any peace based on compromise, whatever its terms, can be only a degree better than a British defeat. The loss of life, of money, of time, will have been to no purpose. The whole terrible tragedy will have to be begun over again. And let no one think that it is for reasons of revenge or in order to enable us to impose harsh and heavy terms that we must defeat the German armies. On the contrary, let us be very generous in the hour of our victory, but until that hour comes let us cease to wrangle about peace terms. For the moment there can be but one war aim—to defeat Germany."

That religion does not make the fighting man less bold, his hand less certain, and his heart less resolute, is evidenced by the fact that the mightiest soldiers since Christianity became a factor in the affairs of men have been, to the fulness of the light they possessed, worshippers of the Nazarene, followers of Him who, being the Prince of Peace, was not afraid to die for the truth. And the greatest of the captains, who in the height of his power denied the sway of the Galilean, cried out in his defeat, "What an abyss between my deep misery and the eternal reign of Christ!" [150]

When this war is ended, ended in the triumph of Democracy,—and until such triumph comes it must not end,—the words of Julian the Apostate will live again: "Thou hast conquered, O Galilean."

CHAPTER XIII

A MAID OF BRITTANY

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It was sunrise in Brittany. From the windows of the lazy train I watched the morning come across the rugged hills. The thatched stone houses set in formal fields took shape out of the gray dawn. The unsightly, close-trimmed tree-trunks, which were like the gnarled and twisted fingers of a heavy hand, became clearly defined against the sky. Cattle appeared in the meadows, and presently people were moving in the roads. Villages were more frequent, and before the world was fully awake we stopped at a city.

Until now I had occupied a compartment alone on my journey from Saint Nazaire to Brest; but my privacy was invaded by a most delightful family, a father and mother and their daughter, the daughter an exquisite miss of five. The parents took the seat opposite mine, and the little girl with her two dolls established herself by my side, but without so much as a glance in my

direction.

I continued to be occupied with the smiling out-of-doors until the light allowed of writing. I was increasingly conscious of the child. Her rich brown hair and richer eyes, her delicately tinted skin, the deftness of her tiny fingers, the laughter in her voice, made her, for a father far removed from the children of his own fireside, a picture to revel in. [152]

Presently our train stopped again. While we waited for the unloading of baggage and the changing of engines I amused myself by throwing walnuts at the children, who scampered about in wooden shoes, trying to catch a glimpse of my hat and uniform, with which they were already familiar as the distinguishing dress of an American in France. They were ragged and dirty, but very polite; and their thanks for the nuts were profuse.

The commotion attracted the attention of my little travelling-companion; and, unconscious of her nearness to me, she came to the window and stood with her hand on my knee while she watched the wild scramble without. When the train started again, she discovered herself, and was in confusion; but my smile and the friendly recognition of her parents re-assured her; and, though I could not speak her beautiful language, and she knew not a single word of mine, we were soon fast friends. She received the sweets my bag revealed with a courtesy and "Merci, monsieur," and then told me all about her dolls. My attention was perfect, and the fact that I could not understand her vivacious prattle did not in the least discourage her.

How glorious a morning we spent together! When I brought forth the picture of my lads and lassies, she was happy beyond words, or rather with many words; for she talked with lips and hands, eyes and body, both to her parents and to me. And then she became very quiet, and sat for several minutes looking at the pictures in her hands and at me. Perhaps she sensed her new-found friend's home-hunger; the sympathy of a child is perfect consolation. [153]

When the morning lengthened toward noon, and the little head nodded, I made a pillow for it in my lap; and while she slept I lost my fingers in her curls.

It was with a pang that I saw the father prepare the luggage for removal from the compartment; and, when my little friend's bonnet was brought down from the rack, the day became suddenly dark and uninviting. I assisted my travelling-companions to alight, and with the perfect courtesy of their country they thanked me for my small kindnesses. I was out first, and the bags were handed to me; then the gentleman stepped down and gave his hand to his wife. Last in the doorway was the child. With her pretty bonnet, her soft fur coat and her dolls, with her silken hair and dimpled cheeks, she was a darling fairy. I held up my arms, and into them she came. With an extra hug I set her upon the platform.

For an instant she stood and looked up at me; and then, to my disappointment, without a word of good-by or a sign, she ran to her mother, and said something in a tone of inquiry. The mother smiled and nodded. The little one came tripping back. Up reached her arms, and out puckered her lips. Down went my arms in an eager swing. Close about my neck she threw her chubby arms, and on either cheek she kissed me. [154]

Only a watchful guard saved me from missing that train! I stood as a man bewildered while the little group disappeared, and for the rest of the day I was not lonely. The touch of a baby's hands and the pressure of a baby's lips had lifted me above high mountains and carried me beyond far seas.

CHAPTER XIV

THE FIGHTING PARSON

"Did you mean what you said about the—preacher just now? Do your thinking quick, and be prompt about speaking. If you meant it, I'm going to punch your nose."

The speaker was "Angel Face," or as he was called, following the militant speech recorded above, "Gyp the Blood." His parishioners in S—, California, might not have recognized his language and his style of delivery on the occasion which introduces him to my readers; but they could not have made a mistake in the speaker himself; the figure and presence of their pastor would identify him anywhere, even at a prize-fight.

And the language used was fully warranted. For two days one of the few "misfits" that the Y. M. C. A. must briefly contend with in France had been making himself particularly obnoxious to the clergyman who finally squelched him. The chap was new, and of the type that seeks to cover ignorance with bluster and to be impressive by emitting loud noises. He made the preacher the target of a good deal of his profanity, and for nearly two days the preacher turned the other cheek.

But, having fulfilled the Scripture, the preacher took a turn around the truck that had carried the party to its work,—a hut was being erected,—and then clamped down upon the shoulder of the vilifier a hand that was heavy and callous with two months of service on the "line" and preached as already related. The mourners' bench was instantly crowded! [156]

"Can't you take a joke?" the frightened husky stuttered.

"No, not that kind," the California divine replied, and continued, "We'll call it quits, since you

didn't mean it; but don't try to be funny again until you have studied a joke-book."

The applause that greeted the "clean knockout" was not audible; but it was loud, and the name "Gyp the Blood" was the reward of the victor. The preacher is "wanted" in France, but only the Fighting Parson need apply. Surely it will be unnecessary to add that the "big fight" is not of the kind just described, although the spirit that secured the decision there is the spirit absolutely essential to success in the other.

The present war has made many calls upon the church, and has laid new and heavy obligations upon the ministry. I do not aspire to deal with the general programme of organized religious forces, nor do I pretend to discuss seriously the peculiar religious problems growing out of these unparalleled times. I am ambitious only to present a pen-picture glimpse of the preacher as I saw him in France, the American preacher in action with the American overseas forces. [157]

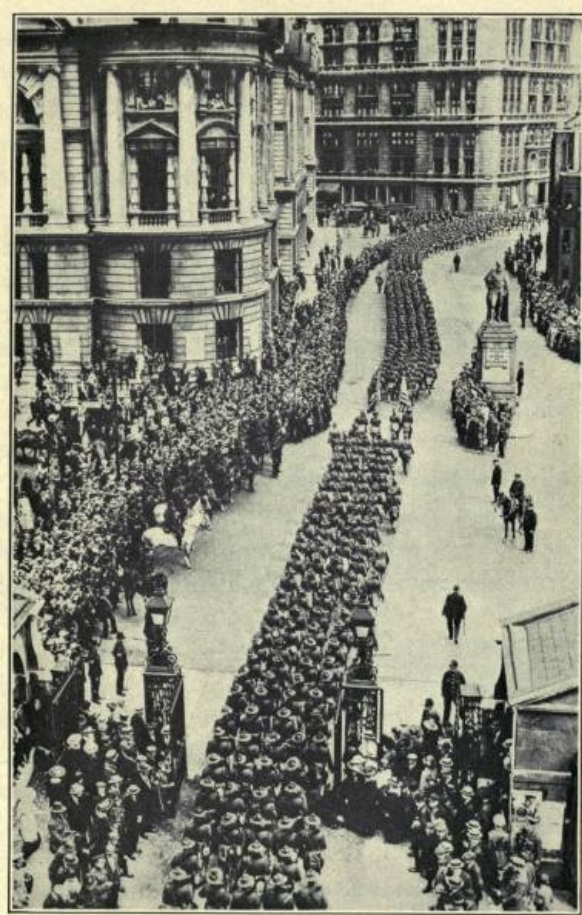
At the outset I disclaim any prejudice for or against. I saw him under all conditions, from port of entry to the front lines, from cosmopolitan Paris to the odoriferous country village, from training-camp to hospital, at times when he was conscious of being inspected and was on his mettle, and when he thought himself unrecognized and with no fellow countryman about. I have no special brief prepared for him; I judged him by the measure of a man. France has only one uniform to-day, the uniform of the soldier; all other distinctions as to dress have been removed.

I found a few preachers in France who made me thankful for the vivid picture of my own ministerial father, which I carry always with me, *they were so disappointing!* One was trying to smoke; it was painfully apparent that it was his first attempt. He was doing his best to be a good fellow, and succeeded only in being a fool. Another was rather loudly arguing with a young Y. M. C. A. secretary and trying to convince him that no man could really get on with the men of the army unless he smoked cigarettes and drank the French wines. The younger fellow won the debate, and did so without my seconding speech, which for the other members of the recently arrived party I felt constrained to make, since I was a veteran of several weeks' standing. [158]

Both of these illustrations relate to the use of tobacco, and it will be well to add that a preacher who would feel himself called upon to conduct an anti-cigarette crusade on the western front would be equally a misfit with the one laboring under the sad delusion that to grip the hearts of the men in uniform he must lower his own personal standards.

First of all, a man to succeed with men anywhere must run true to form, must be honest and be his best self; he may be very sure that the American soldier will not misjudge him or be deceived by him. War has an amazing aptness for ignoring reputations and discovering character. If the preacher did not smoke on the western side of the Atlantic, he does not need to smoke on the eastern side; it will take more than smoke to make him a winner. Of course he may run true to his best form and yet be a failure, but he is doomed from the beginning if he turns his back upon his personal ideals and standards.

It is a pernicious fallacy that you must be like men to be liked by them; sometimes men want you to be different. There are supreme occasions in a man's life when, sick of himself and of his kind, he longs for a comrade and a guide whose language, whose habits of mind and of body, are the opposite of his own. Such times come more frequently where the iron death moans by than elsewhere. A cad or a Pharisee has no place in France to-day, but there are no depths in real religion and simple piety too profound for the men who stand for their country's sake in a soldier's narrow place between life and death.



**THE FIRST AMERICAN TROOPS TO REACH EUROPE MARCHING
THROUGH LONDON AMID THE CHEERS OF THOUSANDS OF
OUR BRITISH ALLIES**

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I heard a first lieutenant from Mississippi say to a young United Presbyterian minister: "I came to talk to you to-day because you are *different*. I feel myself slipping. At bayonet practice a man loses a lot of the things he doesn't want to forget." [159]

I would not refer to this if it were the only incident of its kind.

I have given my two stories of preachers who got away with a poor start. I saw *hundreds* of preachers in France, American preachers with the Y. M. C. A. and others serving as chaplains. *They are a great lot!* Measured by every obligation of their ordination, and by their ability and their willingness to adapt themselves to these unprepared-for and utterly unanticipated conditions, *they are a great lot!* The American preacher in France is a *minister*. He is doing a tremendous work now, and he will do a far greater work when he returns.

I wish that every pastor in America could have at least six months in actual service overseas. It would pay any congregation to finance its minister's trip abroad for service with the Y. M. C. A.

As to the programme of the Kingdom itself, these men who have heard the great spiritual voice of Civilization in her rebirth, who have toiled and listened through long and terrifying days that crowded out of their lives the petty and superficial things, who have thrilled with the uncovered cries of men for the answer to their heart questionings, for the realization of their soul quests, will not return to be contented within the ancient walls of ecclesiasticism and sectarian differences. They, with the hundreds of thousands they have ministered to, will strike mightily against the props of outgrown systems. With the re-enforcements already promised from missionary lands, they will save us from ourselves, and together we shall set Christ free in His own temple. These who have seen the folly of a too long divided command on the western front, and who have witnessed the wisdom of a generalissimo there, will call for a United Army under the Divine Generalissimo, to press forward on the spiritual front of the world. [160]

One day I saw six men building a road from a military highway in to a Y. M. C. A. supply warehouse. They were working in the rain, breaking rock and standing ankle-deep in mud. Four of the six men were preachers, preachers to large and distinguished congregations at home. The combined salaries of the six amount to \$30,000; one man, a Wall Street broker, draws \$12,000; divide \$18,000 among the other five men!

In a first-line Y. M. C. A. division fifty-two secretaries were working night and day, doing the work of one hundred and twenty-five men. Twenty-eight of the fifty-two were preachers. Ah, but you say, how well were they doing it? This very question was in my mind, and I asked the divisional secretary to tell me how many of the twenty-eight he would keep if he could secure the secretarial assistance he would consider ideal. He went over his list carefully, and said, "Twelve." Rather disquieting! I then asked him how many of the laymen he would retain by the same test, and after quite as careful consideration he said, "Ten," and added: "O, they are all great fellows. You have asked me an efficiency question, and I have applied my ordinary business standards; [161]

but some of these very men may prove to be *very* efficient."

The two interesting items are these: twenty-eight out of fifty-two secretaries in a zone where thirty-five secretaries are under shell-fire daily, where the most desperate chances are daily taken and the most menial and body-wearying tasks are daily done, were *preachers*; and the preachers and the laymen stood side by side, and were of the same stature when a business man's efficiency measurements were applied to them.

I found my own pastor directing the affairs of a busy port-of-entry canteen with all the earnestness and success that mark his ministry at home. I saw the pastor of a large New Jersey "First Baptist Church" levelling the floor in a Y. M. C. A. officers' tent. At a brigade headquarters another minister was in charge of a hut on the first line, set out in the woods for the fellows' completer isolation from even the advantages of a ruined village, and at the point where all lights are turned out at night by supply and ammunition trucks creeping up to the line. Another, a graduate of Northwestern University, a strong-bodied, great-hearted, husky saint, was alone in the dugout, the most advanced permanent Y. M. C. A. station in any army. Just 1,600 yards it is from our most advanced trenches, and directly in front of our last batteries of "75's." I saw a young minister, who is the "informal chaplain" in a great seacoast city, marching at the head of a little funeral party that bore three black stevedores to their last resting-place.

[162]

But why multiply instances? The American preacher is just short of omnipresent in France, and he is doing the work of the war from Alpha to Omega with two-handed masculine energy and unselfish Christian zeal. His spiritual message may be shoved across a hut counter along with a can of beans or a bar of chocolate, or it may be quietly spoken about a red-hot stove just before closing-time at night, when he gathers those who care to stay, for "family prayers"; it may be whispered in broken sentences to the lad who has been gassed or to the man dying from his wounds. In a thousand ways it may be given, but it is being delivered.

[163]

The minister who left America to preach to the boys at the front, who departed with the words of his people, admiringly spoken, ringing in his ears, and a purse of real American money ballasting his trousers, has had some heavy seas in passage; but he has arrived. Rude shocks have awaited him, and his whole plan of campaign has been ruthlessly changed; but he has not turned back. To-day he is carrying on, and he will stay through. I saw no more inspiring figures in the beautiful land where so much of America's future is now shaping, and where so many of her hopes and fears are centred, than the preacher of the gospel of the Son of God.

I have not said anything about the formal religious services. They are not neglected. The number of these increases with the raising of each hut and the arrival of each new chaplain and secretary. The pulpit messages our fighters are listening to in France are the most eloquent and soul-feeding that are heard by Americans anywhere in the world to-day. Their messengers are from the first line of our American congregations, and these men of God are preaching as they never preached before.

I have had one ambition for this very faulty picture of the American preacher overseas—to leave with my readers the impression of the manhood of the ministry in a time when those who are less than men are either pitied or despised.

[164]

I reached a Paris hotel one evening utterly tired, dead for rest. I defied the teachings of Horace Fletcher, however, and ate my supper. Before I had finished my meal—I was late—the doors between the dining-room and the parlor were opened, and the programme of the weekly session of the Paris secretaries' club of the Y. M. C. A. began. I gulped my food to get out of the way.

Then a man began to read in a voice that rested me and warmed my heart, a voice of richness and vibrant with personality. He read from "Beside the Bonnie Brier Bush." I stretched my legs far under the table, leaned hard into the chair, and with my back to the speaker drank in the music of his speaking.

The reader was "Dr. Freeman," Freeman of Pasadena, one of the best-loved men in France to-day. He is a "corker," a "prince," the "real stuff," a "humdinger," and a hundred other things, by the ringing testimony of those who know him over there. I followed his trail from the sea to the mountains. I saw the division that he "set up" on the line, travelled the roads over which he distributed his equipment, and heard the men he led there tell how by day and by night he filled his own hands with the meanest tasks and spared not his own body. In Brest I found his manly prayer of purity and strength on the wall of a captain's room. In Toul his successor told me of his unflinching resourcefulness and cheer. Had he his own way, he would be on the line still, out in the greater noise and danger. But he is a good soldier. Now the spiritual directorship of the Y. M. C. A. for France is in his firm hands.

[165]

We sat through a raid one night after I had "borrowed" a pair of his socks and mussed up his room, and we talked of the great days that are to be when the boys come home.

Ah, one of the compensations for the war is the friendships it has made among Christians and the vocabulary it has given them, in which words of faith and fellowship have crowded out the smaller words of doubt and selfishness.

One of the best-loved men I found in France was Freeman of Pasadena, a *preacher*.

[NOTE.—I wish to say that the preacher referred to in the opening of this chapter is Rev. William L. Stidger, pastor of the first Methodist Episcopal Church of San José, California.—D. A. P.]

CHAPTER XV

THREE NEW GRAVES

Out of a blue and sea-cooled sky the sun looked down upon an ancient city of France. Great ships fantastically camouflaged lay in the harbor; darting to and fro were smaller vessels; the streets of the city were crowded with curious soldiers in khaki stretching their cramped limbs after two weeks in the restricted quarters of a transport.

From a military hospital three army hearses, accompanied by their formal escorts and preceded by officers, slowly climbed a central hill toward a cemetery. Three American flags were draped about the caskets, and several bouquets of flowers supplied by friends of the dead men were carried by the drivers. As the quiet group moved through the street, civilians and the military stood uncovered; a platoon of marching French soldiers brought its guns to attention, and even the small children removed their head-coverings; the populace had long since become accustomed to military funerals, but the heart of France never wearies of honoring the hero dead.

Through the long rows of cross-marked graves the little procession made its way—by the tricolor of France, the Union Jack, and the crescent marking the graves of Algerian soldiers who gave their lives for a cause that had not raised its banner in their own land, but for which they were glad to die by the side of their brothers who spoke a tongue that they did not even understand. [167]

When the three open graves were reached, the caskets were placed upon the supports ready for lowering, and the brief burial service was begun. Quietly surrounding the graves were first the soldiers and then the simple peasants of Brittany, who had come to mourn their own dead and who now remained to honor the memory of those who had journeyed from the great nation beyond the sea to help fight the battles of democracy, of civilization, and of their beloved France.

The chaplain of the occasion read the names of the dead soldiers, and then said: "These men were denied the privilege of dying at the front; with fine ardor they enlisted, and with bounding enthusiasm they stood upon the deck when the ship took the path to the open sea. They were black men, sons of fathers or their grandsons liberated by the emancipation of 1863. In the quest of a larger freedom than was ever won for a single race they turned their faces toward the fields where white and black and yellow mix themselves to blend the colors of a just and lasting peace. They fell beneath the hand of disease that might have stricken them at home. It is the irony of fate that no shells ever moaned above their heads, that no hoarse-voiced command ever sent them charging into the enemy's lines, that no portion of their dream of conflict and triumph ever came true. But they had not fallen short, and their coming has not been in vain. In their own hearts they were soldiers; by their own decision they gave their lives to their country, and in the sum of the contribution America makes to this unparalleled endeavor their gift will not be lost. God measures us by what we are; deeds are not the outward manifestation of character; we fail or we succeed first in our own souls. Into the body of the same earth out of which they came in a far distant land, which holds those who loved them and who had great pride in their setting forth, we lower their bodies. We commit their spirits to Him who was called the Prince of Peace, who is the rewarder of every righteous action; who gives the keys of everlasting life to all who have kept the faith." [168]

A prayer followed, and then an ebony-skinned bugler stood at the head of one of the graves. He turned the bell of his instrument into the sunset, and out toward sea beyond the land-locked harbor the clear notes rang. There is no firing-squad in a French cemetery. Back from the grave-crowded God's half-acre the platoons marched, and then dispersed. The day was drawing to a close; the graves were filled; the earthly record of three humble colored men who died for their country was completed.

CHAPTER XVI

A TALE OF TWO CHRISTIANS IN FRANCE

He was called the "Count." How he came by the name, and who christened him, I do not know. At home he is a travelling salesman. I saw him first with an odoriferous pipe between his teeth and a week's growth of beard on his face, standing in the doorway of a Y. M. C. A. secretaries' mess at the headquarters city for the First American Division—the first division permanently in the line on the western front. He was short and stocky, with the face of an Irish fishing-smack captain and a cough that sounded like the fog-horn off Nantucket Light.

I liked him instantly—liked him in spite of his pipe. Men who worked with him all swore by him. He was one of the key men of the fifty-two who under the leadership of a great-hearted and tremendously efficient Ohio business man were carrying the work of the Y. M. C. A. through the vital experimental stages, directly behind and within the fighting lines on one of our sectors in France.

His particular job was hut-building, and as superintendent of as nondescript a crew of carpenters as ever drove a nail he had already raised a dozen or more shelters under the menace of constant [170]

shell-fire; and when I saw those shelters they were keeping out the weather and housing a thousand comforts for twelve thousand soldiers.

Among those who knew him it was the consensus of opinion that he was a short man because so much material had been used in making his heart. His body was constantly under the whip of his sympathies. Far into the night his "camionette" searched the road for stragglers. Often he tore the blankets from his own bed to supply a man whose experience with French wines had been disastrous, and who would have been put into the guard-house had the "Count" not given him shelter under the cover of his light truck.

He had been on the job for weeks when I met him, but his ardor was as intense as when he began. "Why try to sleep when slumber only brings visions of bedraggled lads who need friendly rooms, warming fires, writing-tables, talking-machines, red-hot drinks, and the comradeship and sympathy of the Y. M. C. A. secretaries?" This was his question for all interested friends who tried to give him advice as to his own welfare. He religiously blasphemed his laryngitis, flagrantly disobeyed his considerate chief, and for hours broke every rule that the American Federation of Labor has ever indorsed. [171]

He celebrated the last Sabbath of my association with him by persuading a United Presbyterian minister to work all day on a Y. M. C. A. hut for four hundred drivers of supply and ammunition trucks, who were quartered in a desolate forest miles from every comfort. By putting in the entire Sunday he gave those men a warm room in the evening. The "Count's" tired face was unusually attractive as he stood eating his late supper that night, and his ministerial friend looked as if he had a fuller understanding of the text, "The Sabbath was made for men."

A few hours before I left this division the "Count" brought me a Testament, and said, "Doc, I'm not in your line; but there's no telling when I will 'get mine' out along the road somewhere. Suppose you mark my book up; hit the places you know that have the stuff, and I'll be obliged." I "marked it up" a bit, and put a line or two on the title-page, and left it for him. He was away before I had finished. I am not sure that we said, "Good-by"; at any rate, we have not separated.

The "Count's" words do not always do him justice. The tobacco he smokes is not of a fancy brand. Theologically he is hard to locate; but he is an unassuming, unequivocating follower of the "Inasmuch," and a two-handed man of the Christ.

"Smith" was altogether different; tall and shallow-chested, thin of face and red-headed, he looked every drop of the Scotch that flowed unmixed in his veins. He was a "graduated" British Tommy. One lung was gone, and the rest of him had been so badly used in the blowing-up of a sap-head that the hospital judges refused to give him another chance to die for his country in the trenches. [172]

He was one of the immortal "First Hundred Thousand," the glorious "Contemptibles" who fought from Mons to the Marne, the mightiest rear-guard action known in the history of wars. He was one of those who suffered the horrors of gas in front of Ypres. But he could not rest in London—rest there with his wife and babies, rest there with his laurels. Across the Channel the cause of his race still trembled in the balance, and it was thither that his heart commanded him.

When the army refused him absolutely, he finally secured a position as an automobile-driver with the American Y. M. C. A.; and so he carried me from an ancient city in Brittany to a great barrack camp established by Napoleon, but now filled with American artillery in training.

The judgment of his associates would warm his kindly heart if he could hear the words with which they told me his story. The hacking, deep-seated cough that racks him is more than the evidence of his torture. To those who have heard it and who know him it is the token of a higher heroism than that with which he tunneled under the enemy's lines or faced the shock of their attack. [173]

As I watched him disappear among the French soldiers bound for the front, who crowded the station on the night when I took my departure, the words of another soldier came to me: "He that endureth to the end shall be saved."

CHAPTER XVII

LLOYD GEORGE

[174]

I stepped out of the taxi, and found myself in front of three old-fashioned houses. The vicinity was one of distinction; but the houses before me, dwarfed by the Privy Council Building and the Foreign Office, and hard by the Parliament Buildings, were the strays of another century. Westminster Abbey, not far away, gives them an excuse for staying. Looking up, I read, "The First Lord of the Treasury, No. 10," and knew that I was before the portals of historic "10 Downing Street," for a century and a half now, with only a few intervals, the official home of Britain's Prime Ministers, and in reality the "White House" of the United Kingdom.

I lifted the ancient knocker that for perhaps three centuries has announced guests and that for at least a century and a half has called attendants to usher in the statesmen and the politicians of the earth. The door swung open, and a quiet man dressed in a business suit took my card.

About me on the high walls of a small square hall hung the antlered heads of deer. I followed down a long and simple but impressive passage to another hall, where I ran, head on, into a well- [175]

set-up gentleman of thirty-nine,—Major Waldorf Astor,—who was coming to meet me. He was delightfully informal. Through another waiting-room one passes into the Council-Chamber of the War Cabinet. Here all the British Cabinets have met since the Prime Minister established himself at "10 Downing Street."

The room is worthy of the greatness it has treasured. There are bookshelves about its long walls, and the lighting is good. The books are scarcely visible now, for they are curtained closely with maps and charts; here the far-flung battle lines of the Empire, which have become the front of civilization, are daily traced by the fingers of the men whose hands hold Democracy's destiny. The eastern end of the chamber is flanked on each side by two chaste Corinthian columns. A great table commands the centre of the room. It is covered with green baize and well set off by heavy, formal chairs. The room was furnished with a larger cabinet in mind; but every session of the War Council is attended by those responsible for the numberless leadership tasks of the struggle, and there are seldom vacant places.

There is only one picture in the room now. Above the mantelpiece which tops the fireplace, on the southern side, and directly behind the chair of David Lloyd George it hangs, a portrait of Francis Bacon. He was Lord Chancellor once, although he is better remembered as a master of human thought. [176]

It is said that the present Prime Minister uses the chamber as his workshop, that it is his favorite room, and that he is more often in it than anywhere else. Perhaps because of its convenience—doors open out from it into the rooms of secretaries; and then, too, it is large enough to receive special deputations without waste of energy or time. Perhaps this convenience of the place attracts the leader in whom are centred now the British Empire's hopes and fears, or is it the associations of the chamber that call him?

Here sat Pitt and his cabinets. Here, when the word came from Austerlitz, Pitt said, as he pointed to the map of Europe that hung then where it hangs now, "Roll it up; it won't be needed for another ten years!" Here they stood with ringing cheers for Trafalgar, and here broke the glory of Waterloo. Here Disraeli won the Suez Canal, and Gladstone's mighty form once filled the chair before the fire. Does the gigantic little Welshman lift his head betimes and listen for the voices of the Past? If he does (and his eyes are not the hard eyes of a man who does not dream), he never fails to hear words prophetic of triumph, for this room is a Chamber of Conquerors.

As Major Astor greeted me, we turned to the right; and there on the stairway, with his left hand resting lightly on the banister, and a smile lighting his face, stood the Prime Minister. I shall always be glad that I saw him thus. He had just returned from Versailles, where matters of vast and immediate importance to the western front were discussed and settled. England did not yet know that he had arrived. The morrow was to precipitate him into one of the crucial battles of his ministry. [177]

As he stood there he knew of the impending struggle—and he smiled!—not a perfunctory tremor of the lips, but a warming glow that made the great hall a friendly place. The smile was not for me, but for the gentleman at my side. Mr. Astor is a member of the Prime Minister's personal staff, and by his own worth a favorite and close friend of his chief.

David Lloyd George in the moment when I saw him on the stairway answered any question that may have been in my mind as to the personal quality of his leadership; he is virile and magnetic. Square of shoulder and deep-chested, with a straight neck that gives his fine head an erect setting, he has the appearance of added height that few stocky men possess. His color is good; his long hair, which is inclined to curl at the ends, is turning rapidly now; his eyes are clear, and shine; his voice is rich, and sings. He is one of those irresistible personalities, a man who not only dominates and rules by the mastership of his soul as well as by right of his mental genius, but who binds men to himself. His is the complete opposite of the phlegmatic, judicial temperament; his keen calculations in debate, his weighing of an opponent in a political tourney, are the decisions of an almost unerring intuition, and not the conclusions of a cold casuist. [178]

His oratory and his whole leadership are first of the heart. His enemies have assailed him at this point, but they have not found it a vulnerable one. It is the heart of the world that bleeds and fights and triumphs. Only a master of the language of the soul can speak to it and for it, can marshal its forces and inspire them to superhuman activities, can challenge it over a Calvary and lead it to victory.

Perhaps no other man in Europe has been so long familiar to the American people; certainly no other political leader of the Old World has been so popular with the masses in America as Lloyd George. When he risked his life to deliver his soul against the Boer War, the United States cried, "Bravo!" and in his battle with landlordism, his struggle with the House of Lords, his championing of the rights of labor, and his unrelenting efforts to better the conditions surrounding the poor, he had the heart of America with him.

The story of his life is a familiar one and of the kind that brings a mist to the eyes and a tightening to the throat, as do the tales of the boyhood of Lincoln and Hanly and Grant. He was born in a wee house of Manchester, this Welshman; but an uncle, whose pride and joy he never ceased to be, reared the future statesman among the hills of Wales. The childhood of Lloyd George was typical of the simple customs and the religious faith of his people. He was an active boy. His inclinations from the beginning were toward the platform and public life. In Wales, singers and poets and orators are born, not educated; an education follows, an education in which environment looms large; but a true Welshman could not, if he would, bury *himself* in the books of universities, the sophistries of a profession, or the formalities of a calling. He remains [179]

Nature's child.

The activities of Mr. Lloyd George in connection with the temperance reform began in his childhood when he "spoke the pieces" and participated in the programmes of the Band of Hope. The ardor of his youth fired many an audience of his townspeople with an enthusiasm for "teetotalism" and a determination to conquer the traffic in spirits. It was twenty-eight years ago that he said: "I am a simple Welsh lad, taught, ever since I learned to lisp the words of my wild tongue, that 'whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.' This traffic, having sown destruction and death, must reap for itself a fruitful harvest of destruction and crime."

But it has been since the beginning of the war that David Lloyd George has delivered his supreme philippic against the "Trade." As Minister of Munitions and as Chancellor of the Exchequer he had denounced rum as the super-traitor of them all. It is not to be doubted that the words, "*We are fighting Germany, Austria, and drink, and so far as I can see the greatest of these three deadly foes is drink,*" more than any other words spoken in either the Old World or the New have advanced Democracy toward total prohibition. They were the weights that turned the balance in Canada and in a dozen States of the American Union. They brought demoralization to the liquor forces. Their unequivocal charge of disloyalty against drink has been irresistible.

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March 25th., 1918.

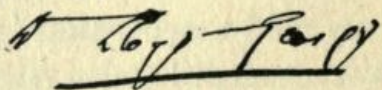
Dear Dr. Poling,

I am following with great interest the War restrictions on alcohol actually enforced and those under consideration in the United States of America.

We have ourselves not been neglectful of the necessities imposed by War. We have stopped entirely the manufacture of spirits; we have cut down the brewing of beer by more than two-thirds and the hours during which it can be sold to less than one third.

Should the exigencies of War necessitate further restrictions we shall follow with interest your campaign for the enforcement of War Prohibition in the United States of America.

Yours truly,



A LETTER FROM LLOYD GEORGE TO THE AUTHOR, INDICATING HIS CONTINUED INTEREST IN THE CAMPAIGN FOR PROHIBITION OF THE LIQUOR TRAFFIC.

March 25th., 1918.

Dear Dr. Poling,

I am following with great interest the War restrictions on alcohol actually enforced and those under consideration in the United States of America.

We have ourselves not been neglectful of the necessities imposed by War. We have stopped entirely the manufacture of spirits; we have cut down the brewing of beer by more than two-thirds and the hours during which it can be sold to less than one third.

Should the exigencies of War necessitate further restrictions we shall follow with interest your campaign for the enforcement of War Prohibition in the United States of America.

Yours truly,
D. Lloyd George

We must grant that the Prime Minister has not been fortunate in some of his words used to deny the petitions of his temperance constituents; that some of his "explanations" have seemed at least to apologize for these brave declarations of another time, to discredit them because of their age. The heart of the church in Britain, where I found it less than enthusiastically friendly toward the Prime Minister, was a heart more of sorrow than of bitterness, the sorrow of a disappointment, a disappointment that was great because so much had been expected.

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But I am yet to be convinced that David Lloyd George has turned away from "the God of his

fathers" and the idealism of his youth; and I am able, I think, to appreciate in a small way the circumstances that have made a great man sometimes silent in order that he may have from many discordant voices the *one* message, "*Get on with the war!*"

Again it is the *war!* There can be but one task now. The Prime Minister, with appalling responsibility for the life of the Empire, surrounded by men of all political faiths and representatives of every class, is no longer merely a spokesman, a prophet, a minister, an executive; in him concentrate to such an extent the directing agencies of the country that he has become in fact the administration of the Government. [182]

When I stepped away from "10 Downing Street," I had these words ringing in my ears: "*The Prime Minister has not changed.*" I believe that the words are true. I shall continue to believe in the man about whom they were said. And, when he speaks again, I shall not be surprised.

I walked back to my hotel. On the way I lingered by the Thames, where only the swift patrol-boats were stirring. There was no moon, and a deep mist closed the sky channel to the pirate fleet. The city was in darkness and in peace. Up the Strand I walked to Nelson's monument, and in the lee of an old building across from it I stood and studied its shadowy outline. The mighty shaft was a promise from the past in which justice did not fail, in which freedom was not lost. It made me strong. The night became as the day, for in it was opened the window of hope. The sum of the experiences of the past two hours totalled the assurance of victory.

CHAPTER XVIII

WORTHY OF A GREAT PAST

These are times when it means much to know where some things are whose roots run far back and deep down. Before me as I write is a cathedral-shaped block of age-bevelled and worm-eaten English heart of oak. Its miniature spires rise not at all unlike those of a Gothic cathedral. It came from one of the original roof-beams of Holy Trinity in Hull, the largest parish church in England. As the warden placed it in my hands, his arm swept the high and vaulted nave and he said, "Six hundred and thirty-four years ago it was placed here." Six hundred and thirty-four years ago! Two hundred and eight years before Columbus started on his journey! Six centuries, and nearly a half more, before I stood there that fragment was part of a mighty support lifted by the hands of men and fitted above an altar that even then stood upon the ruins of another altar.

America is very young, but in a new and very vital way she now enters into the brave and worthy things of the past.

Six weeks in England and Scotland during a campaign for wartime prohibition gave me a vivid picture of the motherland and her unrelenting traditions, her customs anchored in the ages, her unyielding might. It was early in the year; but even so the fields had begun to smile, the grass was green, and presently the hedges began to bud. The khaki-colored lanes—for soldiers were on every path—were bursting into song; there were birds everywhere. [184]

I walked by the Humber, down which some of the Pilgrim Fathers sailed; and in Southampton far to the south I stood before the new Pilgrim monument just in front of the ruins of King John's water-palace. Here John Alden, "a youth of the city," joined the immortal company; and from the dock hard by the Mayflower sailed.

I wandered down the streets Dickens has immortalized, and I climbed the "keep" of Conisboro, and stood in the window where Sir Walter Scott placed Rebecca and the wounded Ivanhoe. I heard my footsteps echo through the cathedrals of London, Edinburgh, and Glasgow. That supremely exquisite creation at York, a spectacle of worship, burst upon my enraptured gaze like a palace from heaven.

At dusk I followed Canon Braithwaite through the cathedral at Winchester, England's ancient capital. It was at the close of a vesper service of song and prayer. Here twenty-three of England's kings are buried, and here until Henry VIII. all were crowned. Here the Crusaders came for their parting consecration; across these Norman tiles they tramped ere they turned their faces toward the distant sepulchre; here is "Bloody Mary's" wedding-chair, the gift of a pope; and the great Canute, whose kingly dust reposes somewhere beneath the nave, after he had learned his lesson from the tide that refused to obey his will, left his crown upon the figure of the Christ just above this old altar. In one portion of the cathedral space is an ancient well that was in the temple of Diana erected nineteen hundred years ago upon the spot now covered by the cathedral itself. [185]

While the gray-haired canon talked of the priceless treasures for which he has long been responsible, the choir-boys began their practice. The music filled the mighty building, and rang in a hundred echoes from column to column and from the tiles of the floor to the perfectly joined stones of the vaulted roof. The flare of our torch so lighted the sculptured figures that they seemed alive and moving through the air; the singing became the voices of these men and women, some of whom were good, all of whom were human, and who spoke so long ago.

I found particular satisfaction in treading the stones of Rochdale, the city of John Bright. Here during our Civil War, in spite of "soup-kitchens" and pestilence, the cotton-workers stood against any petition to the English government to demand the lifting of the blockade of the Southern ports. John Bright's influence for freedom was quite as effective at home as it was in Parliament. [186]

Scotland gave me the continuation of the story British men and women are writing in blood around the world, a story of sacrifice and devotion unsurpassed in history. The pages of the story blend with the pages that recite the glory of Wallace at Bannockburn and of Robert the Bruce. From Castle Stirling I looked out across the windings of the firth; from that Gibraltar of Scottish kings my eye followed the massive wanderings of the Grampians. I caught just a glimpse of the Burns country at Dunoon, the home of Highland Mary, where her wonderful bronze memorial looks out across the estuary of the Clyde. Here is the home of another Scottish bard, Harry Lauder. He is a singer of a different sort, but he plays upon the same harp of which his illustrious fellow countryman was such a master. From the depths of a supreme sorrow he has lifted up a new song that has comforted a weeping world. Some day his fellow townsmen will rear another monument where the little city looks out toward the sea. On it will be the name of the gallant "Captain John," Harry Lauder's heroic and only son.

But my wartime journey was not one of aimless wanderings. It brought me to many shrines; it brought me face to face with those who fight the battles of Britain and those who lead them, into the homes of a people whose hospitality, even as their courage and devotion, is unsurpassed throughout the world. But it was a trip seriously intended and with stern business involved.

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A representative group of men and women, compelled by what they regarded as immediate necessity, organized a prohibition educational campaign for the purpose of bringing to the British people testimony as to the actual results accomplished by the prohibition of the beverage liquor in Russia, Canada, and the United States. Witnesses were introduced from abroad, and a great series of meetings was arranged. Both prohibitionist and anti-prohibitionist supported the unique effort, which was a gigantic educational clinic. The addresses of the speakers were educational rather than agitational, and an open forum in which questions were freely asked and answered was a prominent part of each programme.

Wide publicity was secured and a vast attendance. Some of the most prominent political leaders, members of the clergy, ministers, professional men, manufacturers, labor executives, and writers, as well as all of the officials of the reform, gave the movement their support. Dr. Sir George Hunter, the distinguished publicist and shipbuilder, was chairman of the central committee.

The executive genius of the campaign was a brilliant young Canadian who led the amazing drive that made the Province of Ontario dry, Mr. Newton Wylie of Toronto. Wylie is a wonder! A broken back keeps him out of the army, but in spite of virtually constant suffering, he is a human dynamo, virile and indefatigable, with the double personality of an inspirational leader and an executive. The campaign he generalised in Great Britain was a great success. It addressed one million people from the platform and millions more through the daily and religious press, arrested the attention of political leaders, destroyed the sophistries of the trade, answered the questions of honest doubters, and overwhelmed the arguments of the opposition. As to the supporters of prohibition and the leaders of the many temperance groups, it brought them close together, and gave them unity for final action. As the result of the campaign war prohibition was brought perceptibly nearer. When it is brought about, Great Britain will have taken one more step in her age-long history of progress, a mighty step toward the victory which means peace and freedom for mankind.

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CHAPTER XIX

RUM RATION RUINOUS

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"I served at Gallipoli; I was wounded on the western front. It is my earnest opinion that the rum ration is utterly bad."

The speaker turned now so that he faced the larger portion of the audience that crowded the hall to its utmost capacity, and with which he had been seated. He then continued,

"I believe that there are thousands of glorious British lads who would be alive to-day, recovered from wounds and disease, restored to their country, their loved ones, and their friends, had this rum ration not undermined their strength and destroyed their resistance."

The speaker was a wounded surgeon of the Royal Medical Corps. The writer had just finished an address in Weymouth, England. The date was Wednesday, January 30, 1918. The presiding officer of the evening was the mayor of the city. Following the address an hour was given to the asking and answering of questions under the direction of the chairman. It was during this time that the surgeon made his remarkable statement. The rum ration had been debated, and some apparently earnest temperance people had gone on record in favor of it.

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The writer finds absolutely nothing abroad to cause him to change his opinion that Sir Victor Horsley, Lord Roberts, and Lord Kitchener were correct in their opposition to the serving of rum as a ration to the soldiers. There was a time when a single hour of "Dutch courage" won a battle, and when a battle won a war; but that time is past forever. If we were to grant the desirability of the temporary effects resulting from the ration, we should be bound in the light of evidence produced to insist that the final results leave the soldier less able to resist disease, less competent to take care of himself if wounded. The argument that rum should be given to drown the sensibilities, to deaden the terror of men about to go over the top, is not valid. Rum enough to

accomplish this makes a soldier unfit to go over the top at all into the situations where every order must be obeyed promptly and where every faculty must be supremely alert.

Principal Paton of the greatest public school of Manchester, England, said to the writer that at a certain aviation camp six young men were dashed to the ground and killed because, owing to the fact that they had taken liquor just before their flights, liquor to which they were unaccustomed, their machines in the higher altitude got out of control.



DR. POLING WITH NEWTON WYLIE, OF THE TORONTO "GLOBE"
Mr. Wylie was the executive secretary of the prohibition campaign
in Great Britain.

I have found it quite difficult to show any tolerance at all for the opinions of certain public men of Great Britain, clergymen included, who have asked for the wet canteen in the training-camps set aside for boys of eighteen. [191]

The effect of the rum ration upon the teetotaler should have more attention than it has yet received. The son of a personal friend of mine wrote home to England that it was impossible for him to secure water for several days while in the trenches, and that the tea supplied him had the rum put into it before it was served. *This lad had never tasted liquor before he left home.*

In that very remarkable book, "Letters from Flanders," written by Second Lieutenant A. D. (Bey) Gillespie, who died at the head of his troops on September 25, 1915, I find the following:

"Also I had my first taste of rum, for I have to stand by and see a lot of that served out to men as soon as it gets dark.... I think that they should arrange that men who do not want it could get chocolate or some other small thing instead."

While in Scotland the writer received from a British lady the following portion of a letter written by her "godson," a Belgian soldier:

"If the war is the cause of many disasters, it has also its benefits. Among them we concede the destruction, if I may say so, of alcoholism. In our northern countries alcohol was a necessity, so to speak. Alcohol did one good; that was the idea firmly fixed in the minds of the people. To-day the governments have abolished the sale of alcohol in all the cafés. It is forbidden to sell it to soldiers, the soldiers cannot carry it with them, etc.; and a man is not the worse for that, but far better off. I know many soldiers who every day 'needed' their drop of spirits, and I myself was not free from the habit; yet for three and one-half years now I have done without it, and really my health is better. The bad habit is uprooted. The war has forced me to temperance, as it has forced many others. This must have happened also to civilians, for alcohol has become dear and scarce. So much the better." [192]

Much has been said about the "impossible" water of France. I crossed and recrossed France without being at any time so situated that I could not secure pure or purified water in ample quantity. The American military administration deserves great credit for the way in which it has solved this problem for our overseas forces. From the port of entry to the last mess-kitchen at the front I found that where the local water-supply was inadequate or questionable the great canvas bags were kept constantly filled with the wholesome beverage that to-day makes America famous

from the Mediterranean Sea to the Vosges Mountains. The great water-main laid through the French city in which the general headquarters of the American army was for months located was an inspiring sight and a ringing testimony to America's scientific attitude and her war efficiency. [193]

As to the basis for the British rum ration, Sir Victor Horsley refers to it as the "old pernicious rum ration" which is given to the soldier as a deceptive substitute for food, which decreases his efficiency and reduces his strength. Sir Victor was one of the most distinguished surgeons of his time, the recognized medical authority of the British army for a generation, and a scientist who in his profession commanded a hearing through the world. He has referred to the system of supplying rum to British soldiers as having been established by the command in Flanders during Marlborough's campaign at the beginning of the eighteenth century. He also says, "It must be remembered, for the sake of our honor as a profession, that the army medical service, though an absolutely essential part of His Majesty's forces, has not only never been granted a proper place in the administration of military affairs, but even now [early in 1917] has no representative on the Army Council."

The medical profession cannot be held primarily responsible to the British nation for errors in the vital question of the rum ration and the medical and surgical care of soldiers.

Sir James McGregor, at one time the principal medical officer of the army, issued one of the earliest statements against the rum ration. He says in his memoirs that on a trying desert march down the Nile "the men had no spirits delivered out to them, and not only did they not suffer by this, but it contributed to the uncommon degree of health which they had this time enjoyed." This was written in 1801. Medical men in the United States are familiar with the experience of McClellan on the banks of the Potomac in 1862 when a spirit ration was issued in the belief that it would help stop bowel complaints. After one month the ration was withdrawn because drunkenness and dysentery had increased. [194]

The experiences of Lord Roberts in the Boer War in South Africa and in India, and similar experiences of General Kitchener, caused these men to become unequivocally opposed to a ration of rum.

The army authorities of Great Britain have never answered Sir Victor's following contentions, which had the fullest indorsement of Lord Roberts and Lord Kitchener:

The rum ration is responsible for

1. Decadence of morale. Causation of "grousing," friction, and disorder.
2. Drunkenness, punishments, degradations in rank.
3. Decadence of observation and judgment. Causation of errors and accidents.
4. Loss of endurance and diminution of physical vigor. Causation of fatigue, falling out, and slackness.
5. Loss of resistance to cold. Causation of chilliness, misery, and frost-bite. [195]
6. Loss of resistance to disease (particularly diseases occurring under conditions of wet and cold), namely, pneumonia, dysentery, typhoid fever.
7. Loss of efficiency in shooting. (Half the rum ration causes a loss of 40 to 50 per cent in rifle-shooting. The navy rum ration causes a loss of 30 per cent in gunnery.)

In Sir Victor Horsley's last letter to Mr. Guy Hayler of London he spoke of the great riot that occurred in Cairo,—a riot not set on foot, as had been reported, because the men wanted more drink for themselves, but because they would not stand quietly by and see the officers drinking heavily in the hotels after the time appointed for closing canteens to the privates. He also stated that the enormous loss of men crippled and dead from frost-bite and cold at Gallipoli was due to several factors, in which alcohol played a part not only directly, but indirectly as well, owing to the neglect of the personal care and treatment of the men due to the satisfaction and complacency which whiskey-drinking produces. "Men allowed things to drift," the great surgeon wrote.

I was privileged to be in the front line with the American forces when they experienced their first general gassing and their first raid from German shock troops. I was with them in water- and mud-filled trenches; I saw them when for five and even seven days they had been constantly in the tense expectancy of men who await a raid; I slept with them and messed with them; I saw them in the agonies of the gas and soaked in the blood of their wounds; I saw them so completely exhausted that they fell asleep in their snow- and water-soaked garments upon the hard floor of a Y. M. C. A. hut, resting there without protection only as we found newspapers and canvas strips with which to cover them—their own blankets had been buried by shell-fire, and they had just come from the more advanced positions after being relieved. [196]

These men had borne all without a rum ration. The hot coffee and tea with which the Y. M. C. A. and Red Cross and their own cooks provided them did for them all that the rum ration could have done, and with none of rum's evil after-effects. I did not hear a single soldier ask for rum. As to the insistence of some that it is impossible to supply our forces with coffee and tea under extreme front-line conditions, I was witness to the fact that under the most extreme conditions hot drinks were constantly furnished.

It will be kept in mind that by the term "rum ration" we refer to the regular and daily supply of spirits as a recognized part of the dietary of the soldier, and not to the possible use of alcohol in

special instances by order of medical officers. As to this latter, I have not seen rum or spirits used. The men have themselves informed me that it has not been prescribed for them. I imagine that its introduction for medicinal purposes will depend very much upon the personal attitude of individual medical men toward alcohol as an internal medicine, just as it does in the United States. The fact that the medical profession *is* represented in the councils of the American army, and by some of its most distinguished leaders, and the further fact that medical authority in America has banished alcohol from the American pharmacopœia, are re-assuring. In having such men as Dr. Haven Emerson, formerly chief health officer of New York City, now a major in the medical service in France, to counsel those in supreme authority overseas, we are most fortunate. [197]

Peculiarly difficult will be the problem arising where American soldiers are brigaded with English and French regiments. *But it is a problem that must and will be solved.*

Under no circumstances will this nation consent to the establishing of the rum system that now works injury in the armies of her splendid allies. *That it does work injury, I know.*

It is certainly true that the vast majority of men now receiving the ration of rum, if asked to express an opinion, would heartily vote for it. It is equally true that the soldiers of our allies are not a drunken mob, that they do not fall under the influence of drink *menasse*. But the weakening and deteriorating effect of this pernicious narcotic, water-absorbing, depressant drug poison is unmistakable. [198]

What the surgeon of the Royal Medical Corps said at Weymouth, and all that he said, is true. Canada does well to be aroused; her hurt is deep. There is tragedy in the situation that ties the hands of a people who have sent armies of men clean of alcohol to fight for our common cause under the flag of their motherland. These armies, as soon as they leave the three-mile zone that guards the shores of Canada, pass under an authority that thrusts upon them the curse which their own government has destroyed.

The fact that the immediate and noticeable sensations and effects of rum deceive men into accepting it as a benefactor instead of a curse does not relieve a government of responsibility for finding and following the truth. With my own eyes I have seen the demonstration of the truth which science establishes—alcohol gives to the armies of democracy trembling limbs, blinded eyes, deafened ears, dulled sensibilities, hearts too frail to pump the blood of mightiest deeds, poverty of soul in times when richest treasures alone suffice to pay the price of justice and of freedom.

CHAPTER XX [199]

PHYSICALLY COMPETENT AND MORALLY FIT

"I must keep clean for them, and I'm going to do it."

A captain of the American Expeditionary Force spoke the words. We were standing together in front of a mantel in an old-fashioned room in an ancient seacoast city of France. On the mantel were the pictures of a woman and four beautiful children. The captain was not a saint; he was entirely too profane to be really good company; but, as he looked into the faces of his wife and babies, he was very intense and determined.

There is a question of vital interest to all Americans and particularly to those who have sons in the Expeditionary Forces of the United States, and I went abroad to find the answer to it. Rather, there are two such questions: first, What is the moral character of the American soldier abroad? and, second, What are the American military authorities in France doing to keep the soldier physically competent and morally fit?

There have been black rumors abroad. Stories have been told that reflect seriously upon the man in uniform. Leaders in high places have been accused of protecting vice, of allowing what amounts to a segregated district directly behind the lines. The charge was widely circulated in December, 1917, by certain publications, that more than one thousand Americans from a suburban community of the northeastern section of the United States were under guard for drunkenness after their first pay-day in France. Alarming statements have been made concerning venereal diseases. [200]

I have found the answers to the questions already stated.

1. I have studied conditions in England, in landing-ports and embarkation-ports, in London and in rest-camps.
2. I have lived in constant contact with five hundred American officers for a period of ten days.
3. I have watched the American soldier in Paris on the street, in the hotel, and in the café.
4. I have conferred with those who have special responsibility for investigating social diseases among men with the colors and for conducting a comprehensive educational campaign to fortify these men against sexual temptations.
5. I have visited hospitals under virtually all conditions as to location and the nature of the diseases treated.

6. I have had interviews with surgeons and other regular army officers.

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7. The whole matter has been discussed with a distinguished physician who until recently was the chief health officer of a great American city and a recognized authority on the relation of liquor to vice. This physician is now in the government service in France and is giving special attention to sanitation and hygiene.

8. I have had interviews with General Pershing and several of his staff.

9. I have given particular attention to the French ports where American soldiers disembark, spending several days in each of these cities. On two occasions while I was on the ground as many as fifteen thousand men came ashore from convoys in a single day. These men had their first shore experience after a long and nerve-racking voyage.

10. I have been closely associated with more than five hundred Y. M. C. A. secretaries who served under all conditions of army life. Among these secretaries have been some of America's most prominent business men, ministers, lawyers, athletes, physicians, nurses, and teachers.

11. I have talked with leaders in the civilian and political life of France.

12. For four days I have studied conditions in our general headquarters in France and in a divisional headquarters at the front.

13. For six days I have messed with private soldiers under fire; I was with them day and night.

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14. For six days I served within the front line as a regular Y. M. C. A. secretary; three additional days were spent somewhat farther back, but within the immediate war zone. For three of the six days I was entirely in charge of the dugout which is the most advanced permanent Y. M. C. A. station in any army, being located within less than sixteen hundred yards of our most advanced trench. Directly connected with this dugout are a room of the Signal Corps, a Red Cross first-aid station, and billets for forty-seven men. Three other days were spent assisting in a hut farther back, but situated above ground and in the zone of constant shell-fire. During these days I was brought face to face with men confronted by the most trying conditions of modern warfare. I saw them caked with mud, chilled with snow and ice-cold water, sick and wounded. I witnessed the treatment that they received; I inspected what they ate and drank.

15. I have visited our front-line trenches, meeting the men and officers and conversing with them. I have seen the American soldier under direct fire. I have measured him after the most extensive raid the Germans had until that time directed against him, and the one in which the American army really came into its own. I have been with the American soldier in a barrage, and later when he carried back his dead and wounded and the wounded of his enemy.

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16. I have studied the American soldier after he had marched four miles through mud-filled, shell-scattered trenches to his billet, relieved after eight days of trench life during which he had suffered everything from rain and snow to gas, machine-gun fire, bayonet, and shrapnel. I have seen him in repose and in action. I have seen him before, and I have seen him after, a charge.

I believe that I not only know what the American soldier does in France, but that I begin to know what *he is*.

He is a representative American. And he is living on a moral plane which is *above the moral plane of civilian life at home*.

I have found soldiers who are a disgrace to the uniform; there are individual cases and there are groups of cases that give me keen regret. I wish that the army had a "Botany Bay," that those who insist upon practising the indecencies could be segregated. However few these men are,—and they are indeed the small minority,—they constitute a menace to morale, and exert a demoralizing influence upon those with whom they are associated. Then, too, there are a few officers who represent the old idea that the soldier is necessarily a victim of his passions, and must be allowed, even encouraged, to gratify them. But such officers are in a decreasing ratio to the whole, and privates who bring an unfavorable judgment upon their country are the exceptions, that assist in proving the rule.

[204]

On one occasion two hundred men from just-arrived transports began their self-appointed task of painting a certain French city a livelier hue. Very quickly they discovered that "decorators" of their class were not in demand. The naval patrol sent them back to the ships with battered heads and wiser minds. Two hundred men out of more than *fifteen thousand* tried to be naughty, and failed! I can imagine a lurid head-line, "*Recently Arrived Soldiers Paint City Red.*" Such a head-line would have been unfair and untrue. That story of a thousand men from the rural community of northeastern America is absolutely false. I have investigated it in every French port where American troops land and in in every other place where any considerable number of our men have been quartered. My inquiries have followed three lines, the military, the Y. M. C. A., and civilians. While conditions were worse at the beginning, before our military authorities had their own police programme operating, nothing at all approaching this condition *ever* existed.

Our leaders in France have not conquered the vices that society has battled against from the first organized beginnings of civilization; but, if the American Expeditionary Force is not setting an example in moral idealism to American civilian life, then I have walked through France with my eyes closed and my ears stopped.

[205]

When you see one soldier under the influence of liquor, do not conclude that the army is drunk! It is at least suggestive that in three months spent in England and France, associated with tens of thousands of soldiers, I did not see a single soldier, officer or private, under the influence of liquor on the street, in a public conveyance, or in a public building.

When you hear of one syphilitic, or a hundred, do not traduce *en masse* the flower of American manhood now transported to the richly watered fields of France. An investigation made by a prominent jurist of the United States, who is also a leading layman of the Methodist Church, revealed the following conditions in a certain port of landing. This city has long borne the reputation of being among the most immoral of Europe. The survey covered both white and black troops, and was made in areas personally inspected by the writer.

The record for venereal diseases for four months preceding my visit was:

	<i>Colored Troops</i>	<i>White Troops</i>	
First Month,	108.7 men in each thousand. 16.89 men in each thousand.		[206]
Second Month,	30.9 " " " "	12.5 " " " "	
Third Month,	21.2 " " " "	8.7 " " " "	
Fourth Month,	11 " " " "	2.11 " " " "	

Many of these men were found to be infected when they reached France. Army discipline, it will be seen, soon produced results. The rate of venereal disease for white men when I left that city was less than one-fourth of one per cent and for colored soldiers, just about one per cent.

Let us think of our army division in terms of a modern American city, a city of men, women, and children. But here are cities of men only, men between twenty-one and thirty-one. Yes, men between seventeen and thirty-one. Young men, red-blooded, far from home, inhabit these war cities. Put such a city into your moral test-tube! Is it not inspiring beyond words that these cities, by the records of the Surgeon-General and from the reports of General Pershing, show a venereal rate far below that of civilian life, and a decreasing rate; that they show little drunkenness? And every statement of the War Department concerning these vital matters has been substantiated by my own investigations.

We shall be helped greatly in our efforts to appreciate the facts if we remember that every soldier before he is a soldier is a *man*; that the American soldiers in France are our own brothers and our own sons; that we have taken the best from our colleges, our offices, our homes, our factories and our farms, to feed the god of war who stalks across the fields of Europe. These men have not laid off their American idealism; they have not abandoned their American training and the moral and spiritual instructions absorbed by American firesides and in American churches and schools. We indict ourselves when we believe wholesale charges of evil living, brought against the finest fruit of our tree of democratic culture. [207]

The psychology of such charges is demoralizing. Men falsely accused are inclined to argue, "Well, I have the name; the mark is on me; I'll take the game!" On the other hand, confidence begets confidence. Men are made strong by the knowledge that other men and that women and children believe in them. Our brothers and sons in France have won the right, not only to our love, but to our esteem and faith as well.

There is no room to-day for the quick-spoken, casually informed, and misinformed destructive critic. The constructive critic in the army and out of it, in France and in civilian life at home, will have increasingly much to do; not one iota of service for the soldier and sailor can we afford to abate. They are always in the danger zone. [208]

I found the American in uniform building up about himself a wall of protection in the very attitude he is assuming toward the moral excesses practised by the few. He is resenting the indulgence that causes his country's civilization to be misjudged; he is disciplining his comrade who by taking improper and forbidden liberties endangers the freedom of others; he shows a distinct pride in the fact that American physical and moral standards are high. *I believe that for every man in the army that is morally destroyed at least five men are morally born again.* We have spent much time in discussing the vast task of keeping our men fit to return to us when the war is over, and it is time well spent. But there is another matter quite as important: *America must be made and kept fit for these men to return to.*

This is a report on conditions as they exist in the American army, and does not deal directly with circumstances surrounding vice and liquor in England and in France. As to these conditions in England and France, they differ widely. Vice conditions in such cities as London and Liverpool are particularly menacing; strong drink is everywhere a distressing problem. In both of these vital matters the English problem presents difficulties in excess of those confronting the investigator in France. Through diplomatic representations and with the utmost regard for the customs and feelings of our heroic allies *certainly the same regulations should be applied to our soldiers overseas that now apply at home.* [209]

The results that have been thus far accomplished have been accomplished without conflict with the drinking-customs of our allies. In proportion as it has been found practical for our military authorities to have absolute police control over territory occupied by American soldiers has it been possible to deal effectively with liquor and vice from the standpoint of administering regulations and laws.

What is the attitude of the American military authorities in France toward drink and vice? I find our leaders in France aggressively and successfully promoting the most comprehensive

programme ever attempted by a nation at war to keep her soldiers physically competent and morally fit. An official of the British government, a man of many distinctions and high in political life, told me that the eyes of all the nations of Europe were upon the well-nigh revolutionary policies of General Pershing and his staff.

The programme of the military leaders has been effectively supplemented by the Y. M. C. A., the Red Cross, and the Salvation Army. The Y. M. C. A. is responsible for a ministry that cannot be overvalued. With its huts, which range from the commodious double building in the great cities and in the large training-camps to the foul-smelling, dark dugouts at the front, with its canteens and hotels for officers and privates, with its music and its lectures, its classes in French and its Bible classes, with its athletic leadership and its rest-stations high among the quiet mountains, with its religious services and its personal interviews, it is meeting squarely the moral challenge of this stupendous occasion. It is the most potent hope of the church, and God's most fruitful agency, "for such a time as this." A captain of a company of colored stevedores told me that the Y. M. C. A. had increased the morale of his men one hundred per cent.

[210]

As I have written these lines, I have had vividly before me a group of American soldiers. It is three o'clock in the morning, and they have just marched four miles through trenches, shell-obliterated or filled with mud and snow; they have been relieved from the first line. They are men from four companies of a battalion of a division occupying a permanent position on the western front. They have had the distinction of experiencing the first extensive gassing directed against American troops and of repelling the first general raid over an American front. Of one of the companies every commissioned officer has been killed or wounded in the fighting of twenty hours before; its captain, a gallant Southern lad, died on the parapet leading the successful counter-attack. They are covered with mud, dead for sleep, chilled to the bone, but uncomplaining. Some of them have fallen repeatedly on the way out, and their faces are as black as their boots. They lean against the counters and the tables of the Y. M. C. A. hut, and silently drink the red-hot tea and eat the cookies and crackers. These are the men who have given the first clear demonstration of the fighting superiority of American democracy over German autocracy. They have paid a great price; but, counting all the cost, they have found the expenditure justified. They are the very vanguard of the pathfinders of civilization; they are the knights of the twentieth century.

[211]

I should be false to these men if, having the evidence of their moral soundness, I did not declare it; and I should be false to those who gave them as a priceless offering upon the altar of freedom.

General Pershing and those who are in authority with him in France deserve not a resolution of inquiry or censure, but a vote of confidence with the assurance of our co-operation and support.

The American soldier is the worthy inheritor of the finest traditions of American arms, a credit to those who bore him, an honor to the nation he represents, and the last and best hope that civilization will not fail in her struggle to establish the might of right.

CHAPTER XXI

[212]

VIVE LA FRANCE!

It was the tenth of May, 1917, in New York. The great city was alive—riotously, gloriously alive. Save for the narrow lane kept for the progress of the hero of the day her main artery flowed from building-line to building-line with a vibrant throng. It was a supreme demonstration of Democracy's melting-pot, a confusion of tongues, a medley of peoples, a human flood fed by every racial fountain of the earth.

I stood that day where the multitude was densest, and at the very edge of the throng, directly in front of the reviewing-platform at Forty-second Street. We had waited, it seemed, for hours when suddenly, as such a silence always comes, a pregnant quiet fell over all the people.

Obedient to the universal spiritual impulse, my eyes turned from the gray walls of the majestic library building, and followed where ten thousand billowing flags rolled back from Fifth Avenue like the parting of another Red Sea. Old Glory was everywhere, and everywhere flanking her were the Tricolor and the Union Jack.

I had scarcely recorded the shock of that emotion when sharp and high-keyed sounded the hoofbeats of horses, and drawing rapidly near were the outriders of a distinguished company.

[213]

The eager throng surged against the officers who guarded the open way; the voices of those about me joined the cyclonic thunder of cheers that rolled upon us; there was a bedlam of horns and bugles, and then—Joffre swept by!

Ah, I shall never cease to see him, a heroic portrait in red and white, painted against a great confusion and hung beneath a sun-goldened sky. I was very close to him, and his military cap was lifted; he was slightly smiling, and his eyes were shining islands in seas of tears. His white hair crowned his massive head rather than belied his full and ruddy cheeks; his shoulders were herculean and shaped for the load of a nation; his chest was broad and deep, to hold the heart of France.

In an instant he was gone, but in that instant the Gibraltar of the Marne, the rock against which the flood of absolutism rolled and broke, fixed his eyes upon the place where I stood. While the

question, "Is he looking at me?" was shaping in my mind, clear and strong above the shout of the multitude rang the cry, "Vive la France! Vive la France! Vive la France!"

Three times it came, and from a position so close to mine that, when I swung about, I found myself breath to breath with the voice that had lifted it. The man was young and tall; his right arm was bound against his chest; his face was deeply scarred; and he was in the uniform of the French Flying Corps. As he flung up his unmaimed hand and cried, "Vive la France! Vive la France!" he was the incarnation of the chivalry of war. [214]

The mighty Joffre leaned forward, gazed intently, replaced his cap, and then, as warrior to warrior, saluted.

It was a flash, an eternal moment that remains with you and in you and of you. From the souls of the two, the tender, iron hero of the Marne and the young American who had crossed the sea to help pay the debt a young Frenchman left us nearly a hundred and fifty years ago, I caught the gleam of brotherhood that will not die while a grateful Democracy remembers Lafayette and free men bear wreaths to the tomb of Washington.

Transcriber's Notes

Obvious punctuation errors repaired.

p. 40, 180: The text of the letters in these illustrations are transcribed. The images of the letters are also provided in HTML and other non-text formats.

Caption of the illustration following p. 62: COFEE -> COFFEE.

p. 180: United States of Ameria -> United States of America.

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