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, by Samuel Cranston Benson**

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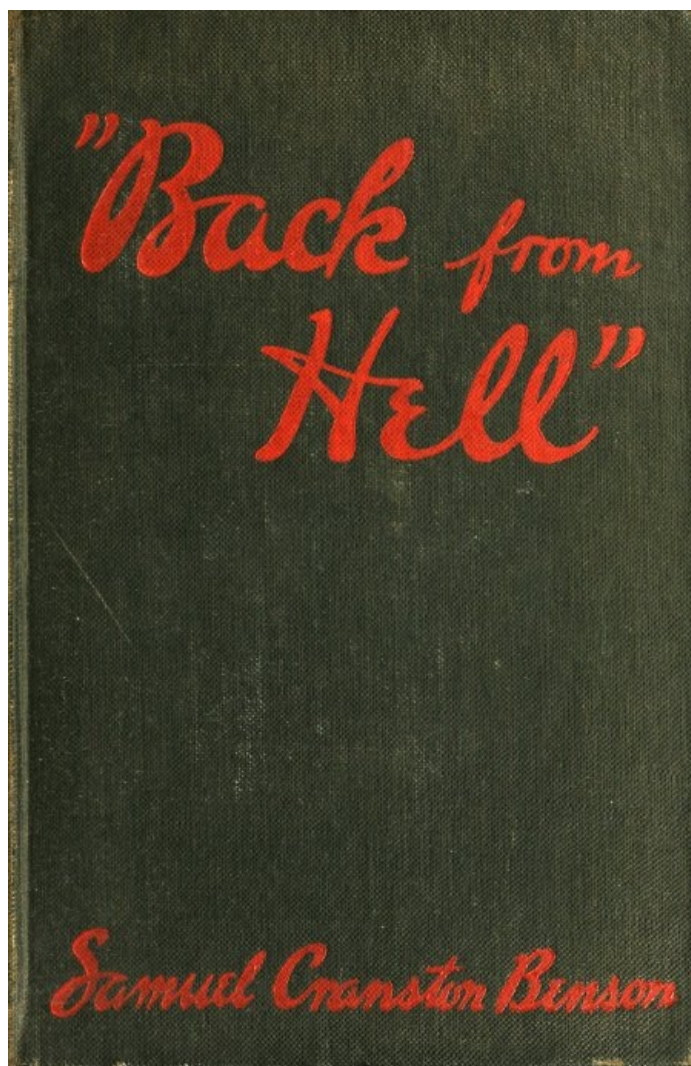
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"BACK FROM HELL"



SAMUEL CRANSTON BENSON

**Who went to the war, a pacifist, but returned a fighting
American.**

"Back From Hell"

**BY
SAMUEL CRANSTON BENSON**

Illustrated



**CHICAGO
A. C. MCCLURG & CO.
1918**

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Dedicated

to

My Wife

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"Back From Hell"

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CHAPTER I A FORMER PACIFIST

When the old *Chicago* cut loose from her moorings in an Atlantic port it was a red letter day for me. She was a good sized craft, of the French Line, and was to carry a lot of other Americans, besides myself, from the United States to France. We were all in a spirit of expectancy, mingled perhaps with sadness, for we were going over to see and have a hand in the most stupendous event of history, the Great War. Although many different motives actuated us, our destination was the same, and all of us would soon be within striking distance of the scene of action. Some of those on board were going primarily from a sense of duty and gratitude to the great European Republic, whose men had come over here in '76 to help America kick off the chains which George III had welded on her ankles, and secondarily, because they wanted to kill a few of the Germans whom they right well hated.

Others were going, and made no bones about saying so, because they were natural born soldiers of fortune and were inclined to go anywhere that action and excitement were likely to be found. A few were to be mere onlookers who were crossing the sea as students of a great world movement, who, from an economic or social point of view, would tabulate in a cold and matter-of-course way, the facts which they observed and the conclusions to which they came.

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I belonged to neither of these classes. I was an innocent idealist, though soon, alas, to be disillusioned. I had resigned a comfortable pastorate in order to go over and, as I conceived of it, relieve the pain and soothe the fevered brow of those who were in suffering, irrespective of whether they were Allies or Germans, and thus help usher in a world Utopia.

I had always taken myself rather too seriously at home, and thought I was a broad-voiced person whose universality of mind elevated me to a position where I could see beyond provincial boundary lines, and overlook such things as race and creed and national ideals, thinking of all men as made in the image of God, and all destined for one great goal which was the Brotherhood of Man, where all would be happy, and each would deal justly and kindly with his neighbor.

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It is a natural tendency, I suppose, of most ministers to be optimistic about the ultimate outcome of the human race, and I was one of this class. I had buttoned my long frock coat close about my collar and rubbed my hands in that familiar, good-natured way, saying that sometime national prejudices would be wiped out and the people of the various countries would come to see each other's viewpoints, and then their differences would vanish away. I hadn't yet seen the German at his worst. The time would come, I thought, when all would fraternize as God intended that they should and this wicked rivalry and jealousy would cease.

It seemed to me that even my fellow-Americans, along with the French and other nations, were too narrow in their views of things, and that, they were equally guilty with the Germans in failing or refusing to understand the minds of other people. The men who had urged intervention in Mexico and intervention in Europe, I took it, were men who were engaged in manufacturing munitions, or who were directly interested in war from a business point of view. They wanted

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dollars. A part of my philosophy was that God would bring about a settlement of all these conflicts in His own good time, and we need not worry about it. Another part of my philosophy, so it happened, was pacifism. I was a great admirer of William Jennings Bryan, and I thought his peace teaching was—well—great stuff! I had interpreted the life and teaching of Jesus as being unalterably opposed to violence of any kind. No matter what the circumstance, bloodshed could not be justified. "Resist not evil" was His ideal and, therefore, it should be mine also, and as I look at it now, I guess I went even further than He did, in my theories at any rate. For He did use violence occasionally, when it was necessary.

"If a man smite thee on one cheek, turn the other also," was my motto, and I did not believe in striking back. Tolstoi, with his doctrine of nonresistance, from whom Mr. Bryan received large influence, as he once told me, was my ideal man, and the only real Christian since Jesus.

I had also said there would never be another war; a war of any size. I knew, of course, that there had always been crusades in history, and even the most religious people had killed each other by thousands, and had often made the claim that God had told them to do so, but I considered them to have been misguided fanatics of an outgrown age who may have thought they were doing right, but who were in reality committing murder and breaking God's great law.

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My father had also been a minister, and he was so meek and peaceful that he held one pastorate for a quarter of a century, a thing which, by the way, I doubt if I shall ever do! He was inclined to be a bit pessimistic and to lament the heartless struggle which takes place all through nature and human life, and he was extremely pacific. I inherited the same traits. My mother also had been a peace-loving woman, but she believed in justice, and I think I inherited from her my aggressive disposition. I was such a pacifist that I was militant in it and sometimes alienated even my admirers by my doctrine.

However, after Europe went to war I could see the storm gathering in the United States, and I looked upon it with feelings of fear and foreboding. I was down in the depths. I felt that "over there" they were already, and over here it was likely that we soon would be violating God's commandment,

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"THOU SHALT NOT KILL."

I did not believe in killing. I had lectured with David Starr Jordan and spoken with Mr. Bryan. I hated war. As a minister of the gospel my natural inclination was to preach gentle forgiveness and tender mercy, and how I did preach it! I was for peace at any price. I preached peace in my church and I preached it on the street. I even went so far as to rent halls and denounce the doctrine of military preparedness as a dangerous and vicious propaganda.

I declared with all my power that America ought to keep herself out of this war and that she ought to suffer any indignity rather than take up the sword and slay other people. I said that was murder. While not approving of the sinking of the merchant ships, yet I said that those people who traveled on belligerent vessels did so at their own risk and that the United States ought not to bring blood upon her hands because others had done so. I had no antipathy toward the German people. I liked them. I had shown this by studying German in college as my only foreign language. I joined the "Deutscher Verein" as my only fraternity, and when I went abroad to study, it was a German university that I sought.

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I knew of course that Germany's military system was a despotic one and that her own people were virtually slaves to the government. But above all I cried "Peace for the United States!" So when I resigned my pulpit in Patton, Pa., and told my congregation that I was going to the scene of war in Belgium, they were astonished beyond measure. I hastened to reassure them, however, that the purpose of my going was not to fight, but rather to relieve distress and carry in the wounded. I had felt a call to take up this task, and at this they became somewhat more reconciled. So in a few weeks' time I was on my way.

When I embarked upon that great ship in New York I was alone. And I want to tell you if you have never gone down the long pier and walked in solitude up the gangplank of a transatlantic liner you cannot imagine the feeling of loneliness I had. Especially strong was this feeling because that ship was to take me to the hell of a world war and I did not know to what else. As we put off and glided down by that old Statue of Liberty, leaving it in the distance, I began to cry, for I didn't know whether I should ever see it again. It seemed as if I had said good-bye to my last friend. Many of the people aboard were foreigners and I suppose I looked a pathetic figure as I stood there. I know I felt like one.

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That night the lights were doused and we began to realize that things were serious. When great ships sail in darkness there is something wrong. The ensuing voyage lasted ten days and when I was not walking the decks those days I used to lie in my berth and look out the porthole and often wonder what was ahead for me.

After a week and a half on the ocean we finally landed on the coast of France. Meanwhile I had made several acquaintances, mainly with French people, and I had begun to think I had learned their language. A rude awakening was in store for me before I had been in France an hour!

RED TAPE IN TRAVELING

As we bumped into the dock at Havre I was given my first scare. I was taken in charge by a French soldier who wore a red and blue cap, a huge overcoat with the corners buttoned back, and red trousers with the lower parts stuck in his boots. These things, however, did not have any particular interest for me; not that I was an indifferent onlooker by any means, but the thing I was interested in was on the end of his rifle; the big shining steel bayonet, which to me had a most vicious aspect. It was sixteen inches long but I thought it looked like sixteen feet.

Without losing any time this man took me over to the Registration Department, where another man asked me a lot of fool questions, scanned my passport, and finally gave me a permit of some kind or other. I then asked him what time the train went to Paris. "One minute," he said in French. I thought I'd have to hustle, but he was very deliberate. He filled out a printed blank, taking five minutes to do so and then handed it to me, saying in English, "Zis will give you ze permission to inquire what time ze train goes to Parees." From that moment on my stay in Europe, as I now look back upon it, was one continuous performance of asking for, and getting, or being refused, permits to go somewhere or to come somewhere or to remain somewhere.

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Now time, money, and patience were all limited assets with me, but the European officials did not seem to realize this or else were very inconsiderate. They wasted half my time, extracted at least two-thirds of my money, and absolutely exhausted my patience. At risk of having my name instantly recommended for membership in the Ananias Club, I will defiantly state that I had to have five different kinds of papers on my person to allow me to start for Paris, to get to Paris, to remain in Paris, to be identified in Paris, and to drive an automobile in Paris. If I slipped a cog anywhere I was lost. They say a chain is no stronger than its weakest link, and I had to possess every link in this chain of paper.

I remember one fellow who had lost his permit to come to Paris. When he passed his examination for a driver's license, the old fossil in charge would not give it to him. As I understood the matter, the theory was that he could not possibly be in Paris at the time as he could show no paper allowing him to come. And let me say in passing, some of these papers come high. I have figured it all up many times, and as near as I can estimate, the papers, all told, which I had to take out during my European stay, set me back about fifty pounds, five shillings and four pence, or in the neighborhood of two hundred and fifty dollars. It seemed as though every time I turned around some fellow was extending to me a handful of papers and an empty palm. But relieving me of money was not all. The red tape connected with it was what worried me most. Before I could receive the particular permit I wanted, I usually had to take another paper over to another man and swear to a lot of things and get his O. K. upon it. This went hard with me because I'm not used to swearing. I'm a preacher.

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In my experience the application was a more formidable thing than the permit itself, and then after I finally received the permit I had to take it down to the Prefect of Police and have it registered before evening. If this was neglected my permit was invalidated and the whole performance had to be gone over again next day. After the permit was registered I had to bring back the voucher of registration and deposit it with the man who issued the permit.

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The reason for all this is that every nation in the war takes it for granted that every foreigner is a spy, until he is proved not to be, and every nation not in the war thinks all visitors are trying to get them to violate their neutrality and thus get them into the war. I will admit, however, that dealing with neutral diplomats is a lot easier than dealing with the belligerents.

Then also you have to remember a great many passwords. If you go out of Paris you are given a password, after proving your right to receive the same, and you can't get in again until you give it. If you happen to go to another town or city on the same trip, the same thing happens, only the password is different and all of them change every day. So it is not hard to imagine something of the intricate system which is kept up, and the confusing details which are required in order to get from one place to another and back again. Of course, if you absolutely forget or lose the password, there are other alternatives but they require a tremendous lot of red tape. You can hunt up the proper official, wait until he is at leisure, perhaps two hours, tell him about your unfortunate predicament, present all your papers, and after convincing him that you are entitled to the password you may receive it from him if he is willing to give it to you.

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I traveled in Europe before the war and it irritated me as it does most Americans, to be compelled incessantly to register my name and address, age, occupation, place of birth, and the same details of my father and mother, place of entering the country and length of time I had been there; but this was nothing compared to the formalities and the irritating requirements of the present time. French officials try to be as accommodating and polite as possible, but if you object to any point, they tell you with a shrug of the shoulders, that they must live up to the regulations and that they must be very careful, as the country is full of spies and peace propagandists.

If you travel at all through the country by automobile, you have to come to a halt at every crossroad and every bridge. Patrols with rifles are stationed at these places and the man who tried to run by one of these would be shot down instantly. You are required to produce all your papers, which are scanned by the guards, who, if satisfied, will then let you drive on in peace until you come to the next guarded point. If the guards are not satisfied, you sheepishly turn your car around, go back to Paris, get your papers rectified, or get additional ones and strike out again. You often lose hours of time and, not infrequently, days as well, in getting the required

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permits. You get angry at first, but it does no good and you may as well quickly learn to keep your temper, for when you think it all over you will realize that when such a vital issue is at stake, every possible precaution must be taken.

CHAPTER III

HOW I GOT INTO THE SERVICE

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My first formal call when I got to Paris was upon Ambassador Sharp. This, however, was not until I had been in the city several days. I had become acquainted on the ship with a party of Serbians who had been mining up in Alaska and were now going back to fight the Austrians. They had some difficulty and delay in arranging their passports, so I remained with them until they got away.

When at last I called on Mr. Sharp and told him I wanted to go to Belgium, he asked me why I didn't stay and do relief work in France. He informed me that I would not be allowed to go to Belgium anyway, as the German Government had already required the United States to withdraw many of the consuls. He said my work was needed there in France. Of course I agreed with him—under the circumstances! Acting upon his suggestion and with his letter of endorsement I went to Neuilly and applied for work in the now well-known American Ambulance. I was accepted almost immediately and then I carefully removed my frock coat and folded it up. Without delay I received a uniform and equipment and set to work. The outfit was issued to me free, although men with plenty of money had to pay for theirs. I remember having my picture taken in uniform and sending it to my parishioners in the States, who wrote back and told me of the interest and comment it caused when shown at a church social.

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From the outset we were very busy. I was put on the base or Paris squad in the beginning, as most all of the new men were, temporarily, and the very first night I was sent out with a Swiss Frenchman to a depot at Aubervilliers, which was being used as a receiving hospital. There on the floor of that great building many hundreds of wounded soldiers lay mutilated and suffering. Some had their jaws blown off. Others had eyes or noses gone. I shall never forget that dreary night. There was a cold rain driving and I was soaked to the skin, but there were many human beings who suffered worse than I did for their country's sake. When I saw one man who had been hit by a German dum-dum or explosive bullet, I gritted my teeth. We were kept working all night transporting those poor fellows in Ford ambulances from the railroad station to the different hospitals, as the French officers instructed. On each trip we carried three lying-down cases, or if the wounded could sit up we conveyed five. For some time thereafter this was our main work.

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But after several weeks had passed, the winter began to break and with it the spring offensive opened up. I was with section two of the Ambulance, later called section Y, and a very capable man from the Middle West, was in charge as commander. This section had been stationed at Beauvais, doing local duty mainly, but occasionally working up toward the Soissons Sector and on a line directly south of Ypres, afterward being transferred to the East. The wounded, whom we carried, were little more than bundles of mud and rain-soaked, blood-stained masses of human pulp. Most of them were French soldiers, we being with the French forces, but we did have also quite a number of British Tommies and still more Belgians. I shall always think of those Belgians as such plucky fellows. No matter how badly wounded they were, as a rule when we talked with them, and spoke about getting the "Allemands" or the "Boches" or the "Kaiser" they would double up their fists and jocularly show fight by hitting him an imaginary undercut, or they would draw their open hands across their throats and say, "The Kaiser Kaput!"

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At first I liked the Belgians best. One night we carried a Belgian soldier who had both legs and both arms fractured, and every time we made a move he must have suffered the tortures of hell, yet never a sound came from him. In fact their stoicism was remarkable; hardly ever was there any groaning or complaining.

But as time went on and we became better acquainted with the French disposition, through intimate contact with French individuals, we liked them better. At first, I had not cared much for the French. I am ashamed to say it now, as it was my own lack of appreciation, but when my eyes at last were opened, my regard for them became high and lasting.

One day after a terrible bombardment near S—, a *blessé* or wounded soldier, whom we had carried back to the hospital said, "Comrade, I love the Americans." I did not reply at once. He continued, "Do you love the French?" "Yes," I said, "I have come to love them very deeply. At first I did not know about it but now I do." He lay very still and white, and after a moment said, "Mutual understanding is the basis of love," and then he went to sleep. He never woke up.

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Many a poor mangled *poilu* who was just about to "go West" spoke in the same strain, and I came to realize that the old love for America which LaFayette had kindled over a century before, still lurked in the heart of France. America threw off the tyrant's yoke in 1776, and France threw off the despot's chains in 1789, and thirteen years is a very small difference in ages between brothers, nationally speaking. Since then both Republics have made a lot of mistakes and rectified many of them, but let it be said both have made marvelous records in the development of democratic government and they are now working and fighting side by side, comrades in the cause of human liberty.

CHAPTER IV A UNIT IN ITS INFANCY

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The story of the American Ambulance Service has been written by abler pens than mine and so I will give but a brief account of it.

When the war first began the idea of serving France through ambulance work was conceived by a few large-visioned Americans. The plant of the fine new boys' school called the "Lycée Pasteur" was turned over to these men for the ambulance headquarters. The beginnings had been small, Henry Ford having donated in 1914 ten ambulances with which the movement started. Early in the next year, however, the American Ambulance institution became attached to the French forces which were in active service. The work of the preceding months was quite essential in its way, as its errors no doubt pointed out the path to the later efficiency, and a larger number of ambulances were being accumulated from week to week. The first donation of machines made it possible for the organization at the very beginning to participate in the transport work, and the ever increasing number of cars necessitated the forming of squads in the endeavor to broaden the scope of the service.

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There were at first five ambulances in each squad and these were loaned to the French forces, but because the squads were so small they were used by the French to supplement the regular government sections which were already in action behind the lines. Their chief work was that of hospital evacuation, which it was soon perceived could be performed more advantageously by the heavier ambulances of the sections which had been working at these hospitals before. But in the early spring a change was made in the organization of the American service and a new man was given charge. Through his influence the French officials gave the American Ambulance Service a trial on the firing line. A section was dispatched to the Vosges which soon gained the recognition of its commanders, who requested that it be doubled in size. When this request was complied with, the section moved to the front in Alsace, in connection with a similar French section. Very soon after another section of the same size was organized and sent to Pont-à-Mousson, connected also, as the former one had been, with a French section. During this time also a squad had been stationed at Dunkirk in northern France.

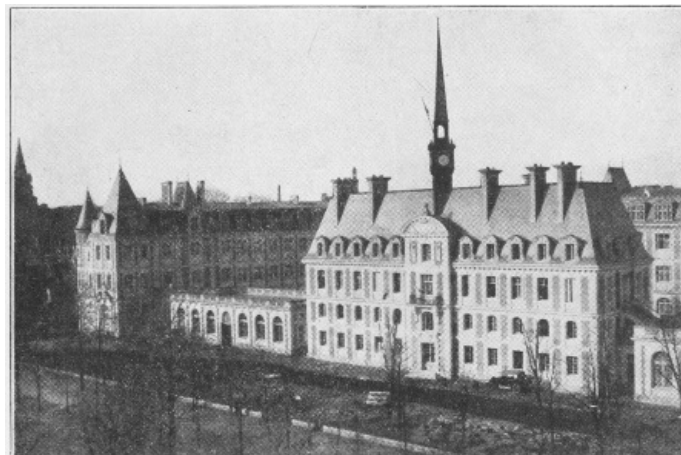
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The American Field Service was at last a reality. These three sections now began to make history and demonstrated considerable usefulness to the cause. The Americans in Alsace took over the dressing station on the battle line, and soon found themselves caring for an entire region, which became famous for its baptism of fire.

The section at Pont-à-Mousson has an enviable record. When it first went to Pont-à-Mousson the French service which was already stationed there was amalgamated with it. Later on this section made the mountain dressing stations possible, which heretofore had been quite impossible. The section at Dunkirk had been engaged in caring for the wounded from air raids and from bombardments by the Germans almost twenty miles away. This section was now honored by being doubled again and given work to do at several important points along the battle line, and with the French army in Belgium.

All the sections now became of acknowledged value and in a remarkably short period their practical possibilities were recognized. Wherever possible the French sections were speedily removed and the whole work given over to the American units. No car could have been chosen for ambulance service which was better fitted for it than the Ford. The mud is the greatest problem around Dunkirk, but it was no barrier to the Ford. The large supply trucks at Pont-à-Mousson were outstripped by the Fords, and the slow and somewhat clumsy mules in Alsace were superseded by them. The drivers were largely college men from Yale, Harvard, Princeton, Columbia, and other universities, who put great action and inspiration into the service. Later on the section from Dunkirk was sent up to the Aisne. The section at Pont-à-Mousson went to Verdun, and that in Alsace was sent over to Pont-à-Mousson. Several other sections were also organized and played a most important part in transporting the wounded of the Allies.

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**AMERICAN AMBULANCE HEADQUARTERS,
NEUILLY, FRANCE.**

This magnificent building was its first home.



AMBULANCES READY TO LEAVE FOR THE FRONT.

From the very first day of mobilization it had been a terrible problem for the French, who needed every last man to fight the enemy, to spare enough to care for those who were wounded in the fighting. This is most important work, as it means the getting of the wounded men into shape as quickly as possible, so they can be put into the fighting line again. The world knows that from the first the man power of the French Republic has been strained to its capacity and the French welcomed with joy the aid which the Americans offered in this direction. It released many of their own men and furnished many cars which otherwise they would have had to supply themselves, diverting them from the most vital points. The taxicab army which Paris sent out in the first days of the war was not equipped for ambulance work, and so from that time on, for almost three years, the men and ambulances from America were utilized and welcomed with enthusiasm.

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The French will never forget and certainly the Americans will remember with pride the assistance they were able to render in the days when the liberty and existence of the nation hung by a pathetically slender thread.

CHAPTER V

THE NORTHWEST FRONT—MUD!

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The section which had been at Dunkirk and in Flanders had some interesting experiences. The larger part of the time the boys were put up in stables and slept on straw or in the ambulances. They had gone out in the early spring and were detailed to work around Dunkirk carrying the *blessés* from the freight depot to the several hospitals as the French authorities directed. Working in mud under air raids and long range bombardments was not unusual to them.

The history of the northwest front is a history of men in mud. From Dunkirk to Verdun and much farther, this ugly nightmare tears the soul. The world has heard of the mud in Flanders, long ere this, and I believe this war has done more to advertise the real estate of that country than anything else could do. I suppose the people of the Western Hemisphere never knew there was so much mud in the world. I know I never did. And Flanders is not the only place that has it either. That entire front is blessed with it extending two hundred miles long and almost two feet deep. If I had unlimited time I would figure up just how much mud there was. We think we have mud in America, Missouri boasts of most of it, and has thus become proverbial. I once read of an old colonel who was riding along on his horse one day in Missouri during the Civil War when he saw an old hat lying in the mud on the side of the road. Strange to say, the hat kept revolving, first one way and then the other. The colonel's curiosity finally got the better of him and he dismounted and went over to where the hat was lying. Giving it a kick he discovered a private's head under it smiling up at him graciously. "Well, my man," said the colonel, "you'll pardon me, but can I do anything to help you? You seem to be in a pretty bad way." "Oh, yes," answered the private, "but as for myself, I'll make out all right, for I can breathe. It's not myself I'm worrying about, but the horse that's under me sure is in a bad way."

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I thought of this story a thousand times while over there, and I think I told it at least half that number of times. The mud in the spring is so thick that it oppresses one. It gets on your mind as well as on your body. A person who only has an occasional trip may laugh at it, but when one drives through it day and night, and night and day for weeks the humor of it all wears off. It becomes a mighty serious affair. In many places it is thick and sticky like bread dough and piles up on your wheels or feet making it almost impossible to move. The clay, or gumbo, in America cannot compare with it. It is whitish gray in color and even when it is not heavy it is exceedingly disagreeable. It splashes on your clothes and flies in your eyes. It gets into your ears, your nose,

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and your hair, and not infrequently into your mouth if you talk or laugh too much. It has a resemblance to gray paint and partakes very much of its nature. Once it gets on your clothes it is impossible to get it off and it even sticks to and stains your flesh so that it requires hard scrubbing with soap and hot water to remove it. Yet when it splashes you in this manner it is pleasant—compared to the discouraging effect when it is heavy!

One day when I was going to a shop with an empty car for some repairs, I met my old antagonist, French mud. It was the genuine article this time too, the kind that gets a hold and doesn't let go. I was turning out of the road to allow a *camion* to go by but in my eagerness to avoid it I swerved an inch too far. Little by little I felt the back end of my car sliding off the road so I threw in low speed and opened the gas. The front wheels stayed on the higher ground but the rear wheels seemed to be trying to catch up with them and finally did so, but when they did, they pulled the whole car off into the gutter which was not steep but oh, so muddy. I labored and struggled with the gas and the low speed. I groaned and swore, I stalled my engine and got out to crank it, and when I did I couldn't get in again. I used up ten minutes in getting my feet out of that mud and getting them cleaned up. I tried it again but it was no use, the car would not come, for it was stuck. That was the only explanation there was, it was stuck in French mud. Not having any chains I tried to put sticks and boards under the wheels and I succeeded but they went so far under that I could not see what became of them. I finally began pulling a farmer's rail fence to pieces in my attempt to pry out the wheels and get a foundation to start from, but at last I had to walk more than a mile till I found two men at a farmhouse who came down with a heavy team to pull me out. When they arrived at the place where the car was stuck, lo, the fence which I had dismantled belonged to one of the men. He looked at me with a peculiar expression. I thought he was angry and was going to scold me and demand payment for damage to his property. In a couple of seconds, however, we both burst out into a hearty laugh for he appreciated the situation as well as I. With a large log chain looped around the front axle of the car the great horses put their necks into the collar and hauled it out. The men would not accept a cent of pay, one of them saying, "Not a sou, it's for France."

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CHAPTER VI A WEIRD NIGHT

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One midnight after a certain engagement "somewhere in France" in which many men fell, I learned of an experience which burned its way into my soul, and I believe will stay there till the Judgment Day. I have read in history of individuals such as the one I am telling of, but never in my life have I had actual knowledge of any but this one, and I hope that I shall hereafter forever be delivered from such.

This particular night the firing for some reason had suddenly ceased. A man named Valke was an emergency watcher at a listening post, when the most blood-curdling thing I have ever known occurred.

A listening post is a branch off from the main trench toward the enemy or in his general direction, which is dug secretly as you go, the dirt being carried back in bags so as not to disclose its location. These posts must be changed often, as the enemy is apt to discover them, and then look out!

Valke was standing in the darkness and seclusion of the post when a shriek rent the air, the sound of which he said he would hear through eternity. It came from a man who was prostrate on the ground. He had noticed the body lying there before, a few yards away, and had assumed that the man was dead. He was a Frenchman, and on account of the darkness could be seen with difficulty. But he was not dead, only unconscious, and something had suddenly revived him.

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"O God," he cried, "my marriage ring!" and then he moaned and groaned like a lost soul in agony. Immediately another form raised up to full stature and looked quickly about. Valke had to strain his eyes to see him and he trembled with nervousness. He did not know what to do for an instant. The man's head jerked this way and that. He must have expected someone to hear the cries and groans of the other man, and evidently was looking around for watchers or listeners. The Frenchman kept on groaning, and the man, seeming to fear that if any watchers were near, they would immediately let loose upon him, started to run. Valke kept very still in his dark post.

Suddenly the fugitive stopped. He turned and ran back to the prostrate Frenchman. Valke saw the gleam of a knife drawn from a sheath. It was in the hand of the apache. In an instant the horrid thing was done—a swift movement of the arm, a flash, and the blade plunged into the body of the helpless soldier! Then silence: silence more terrible than the groans of agony that it stilled. Valke's fists clinched by instinct, the nails cutting into the very flesh of his palms; and then his right hand went to the holster on his hip. It was all too plain: the hideous vulture of the battlefield knew that "dead men tell no tales," and that the wounded sometimes recover and tell things that lead to fearful reprisals on their enemies. More than that: wounded men cry out and groan; but the dead are quiet. The knife had done its work: escape might be surer for the assassin. That's the logic of ghouls.

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Valke drew his service pistol, but hesitated to fire. To do so might betray his listening post and draw the enemy's shrapnel; it might be fatal to the section. In the second that Valke cast up the

chances, he heard whisperings from another listening post. The ghoul had risen and was slinking for cover when the crack of a rifle tore a gap in the stillness. A light flashed up fifty yards ahead. Instinctively, the prowler sought the cover of a bush nearby and waited for the lapse of attention which might let him dash to safety. A sentry on patrol came up, passed, and vanished. That was the apache's chance! He came out of hiding and skulked along the entanglements hoping to find an alleyway to safety. The way led him right in front of Valke's listening post. A flash lamp shot its beam of blinding light full on the assassin's face.

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"Who goes there?" challenged Valke. No answer.

"Who goes there?" ... Silence; not a sound.

"*Qui Vive?*" ... No reply. "*Qui Vive?*" ...

Then Valke pressed the trigger and with a groan the apache crumpled up, dead.

"For a minute," said Valke in telling me the story, "the thought of what I had done made me shudder, though it was nothing but a plain matter of army duty. The man had been challenged, well knowing the penalty of war for silence. And yet—I had killed him! It made me feel faint. But when we examined the body it was all right again inside of me. That German held in his hand a bleeding human finger, still at blood heat, and around that finger was a marriage ring! In his pocket he had an emblem pin and a gold watch and chain; and on his own finger a diamond ring—all snatched from the dead or dying bodies of men who had made the supreme sacrifice for France! Who could pity such a vile ghoul as he?"

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From that hour I believe my transformation began. I thought of my sacred calling, the ministry. My church at home flashed into my mind. What would people think? How would I stand in the eyes of God? I reflected on my former teachings and beliefs. Could I face my friends, to whom I had preached peace and gentleness, now that I had applauded violence and war? Was it right or justifiable? My mind was very much perturbed and I was extremely nervous. A process of moral regeneration of my ideas was going on. This, I now believe, to be as important as a man's spiritual conversion, and step by step this book unfolds the process in my life. I stood at an hour of decision. I faced life. Its issues must be met. Here in the presence of death I had my supreme struggle. Time divided! The roads parted. Eternity was ahead. Where was I? I was in hell! Right then it surrounded, enveloped, engulfed me. The hour was freighted with destiny. Then came a sudden high resolve. "I must take the path of right and duty, wherever it may lead, e'en 'though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, Thou art with me.' Duty may require violence and war." My pacifism began to fade away, as I saw visions of mutilated men. Then all went black.

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CHAPTER VII THE RED CROSS

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Caring for men, not only those who are wounded, but for those who are sick or in trouble as well, the Red Cross is without a doubt the greatest relief organization in the world today. It is so far-reaching in its scope that it does not stop with the soldiers, but includes also in its ministrations indirect victims of war—the widows, the fatherless, the aged left desolate, the homeless, and the refugees of every age and condition of life. Heretofore some people have had a wrong impression of this great agency, thinking that it ministered merely to unfortunate men on the battle field. This is far from being the case, however. It holds out its hand of hope and help to many other thousands who would languish in hopelessness and despair but for its kindly succor.

To be sure in war time the most critical point of all is the battle line. And the most important man is the soldier. He must be kept fit to do his work or all else fails. Therefore naturally enough the Red Cross, or *Croix Rouge* as it is called in France, focuses its attention mainly on the fighting men. The problem of caring for the wounded in the present conflict is so different and so much more vast than in any previous war that a comparison is well nigh impossible. Back in our Civil War there was no Red Cross organization and the facilities for attending to the needs of the injured and the sick were extremely limited to say the least. Consequently while we did the best we could, hours and days often passed, before a Wounded soldier could be attended to, and many deaths ensued which would be avoided today. In fact the mortality percentage was immensely higher than in the present war. This sounds almost unbelievable in view of the many fearful devices which the Germans have used and the constant reports of awful carnage. But when we base our death estimates upon the actual number of men engaged the face of the situation changes very materially. We must remember that even in time of peace in civil life among twenty million men there will be thousands of deaths each day and the chances of saving a sick or wounded man are far greater today than ever before.

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The marvelous Red Cross institution has sought out the best physicians and surgeons of every country and the most efficient nurses as aids; and by research investigation and experiments has brought down to the finest point that science has yet attained the matter of saving life. Any person who has had anything whatever to do with this great agency will testify to its marvelous skill and efficiency.

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Moreover, aside from its merely utilitarian aspect, there goes with the Red Cross Angel in Europe that sentimental sweetness and that delicate touch which is so treasured by the heart of every

soldier. It is the beginning, by the greatest Mother in the world of the fulfillment of the prophecy of Jesus, "I was hungry, and ye gave me to eat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me; verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me." In this way real religion is practiced in the trenches. In this way is that new Christianity taking shape in Europe which is to be the religion of the future in America.



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**AN AMERICAN WOMAN CARING FOR A LITTLE
WOUNDED FRENCH CHILD.**

Another of the great movements for the uplift and welfare of the soldiers is the Y. M. C. A. It has long been recognized that there are many strong and peculiar temptations in the life of a soldier which do not come to people in the ordinary walks of life. The first of these is the temptation to homesickness. With armies from all over the world concentrated in France, and with millions of boys for the first time in their lives separated from their old associates and environments and set down in the midst of a new atmosphere among people of a foreign tongue and different habits and modes of living, it would be strange, indeed, if they did not have a longing for home, old acquaintances, and familiar faces. Companionship and sympathy are the things they need above all else. Confidential relations between themselves and those whom they can call friends is worth everything, and this is exactly what the Y. M. C. A. establishes. It counteracts, if not entirely in large part at any rate, the tendency toward homesickness. In a land which is strange, where there are no acquaintances and no home atmosphere, the Y. M. C. A. secretaries and the Y. M. C. A. huts furnish the only touch of home that the soldier has. Here he comes when tired and beaten and spent with war; here his footsteps turn when his soul longs for an association which money cannot buy. Here he finds exactly what he needs, namely other boys who are lonely too and who are seeking the same satisfaction that he wants.

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In the hut he first finds the secretary. The man who has charge of the building is there to be used in any way he is needed. He is not there to push religion on to homesick soldiers. Above all things, remember that the secretary is a failure who is continually trying to force his religion down the throats of the men and boys who want good fellowship. After gaining the friendship and respect of a man and his confidence it is not unlikely that the influence of a secretary will exert itself in a religious manner; but even then it will be indirectly, unless and until there is some definite evidence from the man himself that he is interested and wants it.

In other words the Y. M. C. A. as such, is not a revival meeting whose object is to impress the weight of men's sins upon them when that weight presses heavily enough anyway; but rather it is a place of human feelings and homelike atmosphere. A boy comes in and finds writing paper for a letter to his mother. In one corner at the top is the Red Triangle, emblem of body, mind, and spirit; and in the other corner are the words: "With the Colors." When the letter is written, stamps can be had in the building and the letter is mailed there. The boys have different kinds of games to play and good books to read so that with the amusement and comradeship they can also get some mental benefit. When a man comes in from the trenches dirty and fatigued and about disgusted, there is nothing else in the whole makeup of the war-organization which will do what this institution does.

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The Knights of Columbus contribute quite as freely to the comfort of the soldiers, and I do not believe there is a boy on the Western front who would tolerate a word against either of them. It strikes me that the religion of the Red Cross type—a type which includes the Y. M. C. A. and the Knights of Columbus—is the kind which the Master exemplified in His life and the kind which he intended for us. I feel that it is a far truer and higher form of religion than many of the brands that are being peddled about the world today, and I hope when the war is over, that the whole world may adopt it.

CHAPTER VIII

WHEN FRANCE WAS FIRST "GASSED"

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At the stations these days we found numbers of poilus who were "done in" by the German explosive bullets, many of them breathing their last. Poor devils, writhing in pain and agony! It was bad enough to have their flesh penetrated by the capsule of lead and steel, but to have added to it the excruciating torture of having the bullet explode or expand after it got inside, was fiendish.

But such was the German's idea of "military necessity." They had thrust aside every consideration of humanity, and every ideal of morality, and were employing ruthless and frightful methods to gain their military goal, which as they said "must be attained at all costs."

And cost it did.

It cost innocent life and untold agony.

It was daily costing conscience and character.

It was costing Germany that standing among the nations which is so necessary to the future, and she was sacrificing her national honor for transitory dreams of power and wealth.

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The Germans had employed the most fearful implements that the genius of their fertile brains could devise.

Liquid fire which seared the flesh, and electric currents which burned most dreadfully, were among the lighter forms of their torturous warfare.

The poison gases capped the climax.

One afternoon, at the second battle of Ypres, they let loose this demon of the devil.

From a distance of two miles the ambulance men had been watching the engagement, waiting for the signal to come forward to transport the wounded men.

The field glasses betrayed every movement on the battle line.

Suddenly, and without any apparent cause, the Allied lines seemed to break, and the fields were alive with running figures.

Astonishment took hold of the spectators.

The impossible had happened, and the French Army was in wild retreat.

Figures were seen tottering and stumbling across the meadow, soldiers were reeling to and fro, staggering like drunken men. Falling down upon the ground, waving their arms frantically, they kicked their legs in the air, agonized and groaning. Some of them came into the Red Cross dressing station, coughing, choking, and strangling. Their faces were green and their chests were heaving. Between gasps, they related an incredible tale.

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The Germans had opened up a bombardment of our trenches with some new, but hellish, weapon. A greenish, gray gas had appeared above them, and hung low, instead of rising. It seemed to be heavier than air, and soon it made its way down into the trenches, choking our men and throwing them into a state of terror.

They tried to fan it away with their blankets. But no use, it only spread the gas, which got into their throats and lungs and tortured them beyond all description.

"God knows we will fight like men," they said, "but to be smothered like rats is different. No

human being could endure such suffocation. God never meant a man to breathe that stuff and we'll make those hell-hounds pay for it."

But hundreds of poor poilus had already "gone West," and those who escaped were in such a condition of permanent disability and weakness that there was no danger of their making the Germans pay. Many Canadians, too, brave fellows, died that day, but on that day also they became immortal.

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The stretcher bearers had seen it all, and now upon the signal, plunged into the work of lifting the sufferers into the ambulances and carrying them back to be treated and cared for. For days this thing endured, until at last the Allies devised a gas mask or respirator which completely nullified the effects of the deadly chlorine, but they paid an awful price before they got it. It is a very simple device, consisting of a long cap of light canvas or similar material, soaked in a chemical solution which absorbs or neutralizes the poison of the gases. The cap has large eye holes with glass windows. The air from the lungs is expelled through a tube which has an outward opening valve, so that you must breathe in through the treated gauze. One's coat is buttoned tightly around the lower end of this cap or "smoke helmet," so that no gas can enter from below. It is put on in twenty seconds and can withstand five hours of the poison gas.

Poison gas! Had the nation of *Kultur* descended to such fiendish methods of torture? Yes, and to worse ones. It angered me. I had already pulled off my frock coat. I now shed my vest also. I was in process of preparation for the supreme battle—the moral struggle—to decide when a man's a man; to determine what attitude and inward action I should take in regard to this kind of thing. I could see that I must settle that problem sooner or later.

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CHAPTER IX WHEN JACQUES "WENT WEST"

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One of the most pathetic of the personal experiences which I had while I was in the service was in my association with a young poilu of about nineteen.

I had become well acquainted with the lad and we had many an interesting talk together, he speaking in his inimitable French manner and I responding in my butchered-up attempt at that language.

One day, however, after we had been speaking of how we were going to get the Germans, Jacques must have become a little careless, and when he went up to his fire step, raised his head a little too high, for he received an ugly skull wound.

Some time afterwards I was by his side and, in a husky whisper, he told me he was seriously wounded. He asked me to bring him a pencil, and said he was afraid he was "done in." He then fumbled clumsily about in the pocket of his grand-tunic, or great coat, until he found a piece of paper. It was in reality a piece of cardboard on which was a photograph of himself taken with his mother some years before. It was old, faded, and discolored, and on the back of it he wrote a message which ran something like this:

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Dear Mother—It has been some time since I heard from you. You doubtless know that father and both brothers have been killed in the trenches some time ago. Now I am wounded also, and I may not be able to come to you, as I expected to do next week. But, Mother dear, even if I do not get to see you, don't feel badly anyway because you've given all for *La Belle France*, and I may see you some time—over there—beyond the range.—Lovingly,

Jacques.

Personally I had thought and hoped that his wound was not so serious and it would not be necessary for me to deliver the message to his mother. But he knew better than I. And three days later worse came to worst and poor Jacques "went West." The tragic duty of taking his body back to his lonely mother, somewhere in France, devolved upon me. I also handed her his message, but I could not remain. Her grief was too deep. I fairly ran away from that house.

But that mother's eyes penetrated my soul for days and weeks, and my thoughts, try as I might, could not get away from her lot. In about three weeks I felt a strong pull and I made my way back to her little humble home to see if I could in any way lighten her burden a bit, or perhaps say some word to bring just a little comfort or assuage her heart's grief. When I rapped on the door and she answered and saw who I was, she fairly beamed with pleasure and threw her arms about my neck exclaiming, "Mr. Benson, I am so glad you have come," and then rushing over to the dresser drawer she brought out that worn and faded photograph with her son's message on the back, and as she showed it to me she exclaimed: "I am going to keep it till I die! It's not for the value of the picture, but that message interprets the heart of my boy to me. It tells me that he loves me, and, Mr. Benson, do you know, I wish I might have another husband and three more boys to go and fight for *La Belle France*!"

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That's an example of heroism and patriotism for America!

And after that, for several weeks, that little loyal French mother, now alone in the world, sent me regularly some cakes and delicacies, with the message that as she did not have any of her own now to care for, she must try to do her best to help those who were helping France to win the battle for liberty.

Poor Jacques had "gone West." And she need not send him any more clothes or food, but Jacques and his two brothers and his father too, have thrown their lives into the scale, and have added just so many more names to that honor roll, which already is large, of patriots of France. They loved their country. Every man, woman, and child over there does likewise, and France will honor them all eternally.

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I pray God's blessing on Jacques' mother now.

CHAPTER X "TRENCH NIGHTMARE"

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Often in the long, long hours of the midnight during that period I brooded over the situation. Frequently the wheels of my thought would turn swiftly, and cause me to reflect upon that life in the terrible trenches; in those uncanny and frightful sewers, dug in the ground, cut there in No Man's Land, and, it sometimes seemed, in no God's land, where the guns bark, and the red fire leaps, and the shrapnel hisses, and the howitzers rip and snort in the daytime, and where glassy-eyed rats and vermin sneak and glide, spying upon the fatigued soldier in the night time, ready to finish up the work which the explosive may not quite have ended.

Out there, in those animal burrows, surrounded by mud and blood and bacterial mold, where, week after week, the poor, plucky poilus existed, it could not be called living, and month after month remained in the weird, grim business of killing their unseen opponents by machinery.

I can picture them now lying upon that bank of dirt, some two feet high and eighteen inches wide—the fire step, they call it—which runs along the front side of the trench, six feet in the ground and three or four feet wide, with nothing overhead, or nothing but branches of trees covered with dust and mud.

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As I write I can see the entire spectacle: How those men stuck out their rifles through the openings left for them and, at the given signal, fired, never knowing whether they hit and killed their objects.

But those bullets went home, all right.

The list of wounded on either side, at the end of the week or the end of the month, told more tragically than any individual report could tell that those bullets went home. And day after day, and week after week, every three minutes, or every four minutes, those men raised their smoking, reeking tubes of death, and let fly the fatal messengers.

And night after night they had to lie upon that bench bed of dirt and indulge in disturbed sleep, or else gaze out upon that knotted, gnarled mass of barbed-wire entanglements in front of the trenches, as it glistened in the moonlight; that barrier, which, unlike the barbed wire that civilized man—and civilized beast—is accustomed to, has barbs upon it, not one but four inches in length, to rend and tear and catch the flesh of man, and hold him wriggling, writhing and squirming as he tries to charge the enemy, just long enough to give that enemy the chance, from his hiding place over yonder under the ground, to shoot him full of bullet holes.

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God, what a nightmare it is! And when an assault was ordered and they charged down the alleyways between the sections of barbed-wire entanglement, they found themselves confronted by storms of bullets from those wicked machine guns, each one of which speaks at a rate of 450 to 3,000 times per minute.

In order to have even a gambler's chance of capturing the enemy's trench, therefore, sometimes it became necessary to abandon the open alleyways and charge right across and "over the top" of those awful masses of barbed wire. This was almost certain death for those of the first ranks. Other lines of men following close upon the first might also be mowed down as well, as they were caught upon the wire, but after a while all the wire is covered up, and all the space is filled between the top of it, waist high, and the earth, with soldiers' bodies, a veritable foundation of human flesh, upon which the following waves of men usually rushed over successfully without becoming entangled.

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If fortune was with them, they had some possibility of taking the trench of the enemy.

If they did, what next?

The enemy, or what was left of him, retreated through communicating trenches to others in the rear, of which there are many, planted a stick of dynamite after him, to blow up his retreat, and found himself, in a few moments, a hundred yards back, and intrenched just as solidly as he was before. Perhaps even more solidly, because he had now the men who escaped from the front line trench in addition to the same number in the second line, which now became the first.

Such is war today.

And, because of this method of warfare, the death list is a hundredfold more frightful, and so along that battle line in France, three hundred and fifty miles in length, the weekly toll of human life staggers all conception. The contemplation of it saddens the soul. Nothing but the vision of Liberty and Right triumphant can ever compensate for the slaughtered loved ones.

The piles of dead and wounded men, bleeding, groaning masses of human pulp, rotting flesh and decaying bones, carry disease and fever to ambulance rescue workers and all. These are the black silhouettes which go to make up that grim and gloomy picture, that nightmare of the trenches. These, of course, are the things one sees in his dark and somber moments. But it is not all like this.

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CHAPTER XI CALM BEFORE A STORM

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Section "Y," to which I had been attached, was about this time transferred to a point much farther east and south. They were a jolly bunch of good fellows and always had a sociable time together. As a rule the best of feeling existed between all of the members but I remember one occasion on which the tranquillity of the party came perilously near being upset, temporarily at least. One of the boys was of a rather argumentative turn of mind and would often deny the statements of the other boys apparently just for the sake of controversy. I think he believed that matching wits and defending one's position were wholesome mental exercises. I will not mention his name as there is no animosity whatever between us, but I will say that he went later into the diplomatic service of our country. He had been a kind of soldier of fortune and without a doubt had knocked about the world a lot and seen a number of things. In his time he had been to nearly all the countries of the globe and had been in some colleges and universities.

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On this particular evening we were sitting around the tables at our quarters, each fellow telling of some exploit of his previous life, and he had related some strange experiences of his travels. It happened that the night before, when I had made the statement that I once crossed the Atlantic on the *Lucania* in six days he had flatly contradicted me, saying that the *Lucania* was a much slower boat. It irritated me to have him contradict me in front of all the boys concerning a thing which I knew I had done. But I let it pass. This night, however, it was different. Heaven only knows how we drifted upon the subject but I happened to make the remark that students at Princeton were compelled to sign a pledge that they would not belong to any secret fraternity while they were members of the school. My friend promptly greeted this remark with the astounding statement, "They do not!" I said, "Well, I went to school there and I was required to sign the paper, and so I ought to know." He still persisted in his denial, placing me in a rather embarrassing position before the other fellows. I got crusty. I said, "Look here, son, you denied a statement that I made last night about a fact of my own life, and now you have done it again. You had better tend to your own business hereafter, and stop trying to make me out a liar, or there is going to be trouble." He said, "What will you do about it?" I replied pugnaciously, "I'll flatten your face, that's what I'll do about it." Of course, he said something about "starting in" whenever I got ready, and so forth, and the argument died down a bit. A moment later when I stepped outside, some of the boys asked me if I knew who I had been talking to. I said, "No, but I'll do what I said I would, anyway. Who is he?" They said, "That fellow is an ex-prize fighter and at one time was in the ring with the greatest pugilist in England." "Is that right?" I said in astonishment, "Well, I don't think I'll slap his face at all, and he can deny any statement I make with perfect impunity." We all had a laugh and in his presence thereafter I was very meek and lamblike. I pulled my horns way in.

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After all he was a good fellow and from this moment we got along on the best of terms. We had a good many days of calm about that time and not very much to do but wait for the storm and action of war. Sometimes, to be sure, we would be called out on long trips to the front to bring in some wounded officer or some dignitary but our ordinary duties were to carry from the station to the several hospitals the wounded who came in on frequent trains. The French officials, however, seemed to appreciate our work even though it was quite humble. French courtesy and gratitude are such wonderful things that the officers gracefully accepted the work and praised it anyway, though I have often thought that generosity must have blinded them to the many deficiencies and shortcomings. I sometimes wonder if they do not smile inwardly and, when they are alone, laugh outwardly at the service which we thought quite creditably done. Americans have a way of thinking that their work is superior even though it may not be looked upon as such by others. At any rate ours was done in the best spirit of good will and it was certainly accepted in a similar spirit.

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For a while things were comparatively quiet. Then, however, all of a sudden attacks were begun, and the boys had all they could do making trips back and forth carrying the wounded from the front to the hospitals.

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CHAPTER XII IF AN AMBULANCE COULD SPEAK

In silent moments of rest between trips I occasionally would reflect, "If an ambulance could only talk, what tales it would tell!" No doubt, sometimes it would tell of the pleasant occasions and of merry conversation, and then again it would turn to the tragic and the sad. Now it would be of victorious moments, and again it would be of defeat and discouragement. Occasionally it would be gay and glad, and speak of heroism if some slightly wounded man was riding in it and talk joyfully of the hope and gladness in his heart. But far more frequently, I fear, it would tell of blood and pain and hate and death.



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AN AMERICAN AMBULANCE READY FOR DUTY.

**The ambulance is waiting outside the dressing station.
Any moment a call may come and galvanize it into
action.**

As an example of ambulance tales there is one little incident which I feel I must relate. After the battle at B—, where the French Colonials of Africa composed the main force of the Allies' soldiers, we had hundreds of these dark-hued men to transport in our ambulances. The slaughter had been terrific, and the wounded men were extraordinarily mutilated.

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Two of these Turcos had been loaded into our ambulance and we were waiting for a third passenger, when a German prisoner was brought out on a stretcher. He was very seriously injured, and lay there quiet and pale. One of the Turcos was badly wounded, and the other one not so seriously. We received orders to carry the German wounded prisoner to the same hospital as the Turcos, and so we lifted his stretcher and slid it into the upper story of the ambulance, a suspended arrangement which enabled us to carry three men while otherwise we could have carried only two. There was a considerable distance to be traversed between the station where we received our men and the hospital to which we were told to take them. After we had been on the road for some minutes and were driving along at a fairly good rate, there was a violent vibration and shaking of the car. We switched off the gasoline and threw in the brakes and, bringing the car to a stop, jumped down and ran around to the rear to see what was wrong.

The first thing I saw was a stream of blood trickling down from the stretcher above and soaking the uniform of one of the Turcos in the bottom of the car. I then saw that this fellow had his knife in his hand, and I excitedly asked what was the matter. The other Turco, who was not so badly wounded explained that his partner did not like the idea of having a live German riding in the same car with him, and so he had slipped out his trench knife and with what strength he had left, had rallied and raised himself up enough to thrust it upward through the stretcher and into the back of the German above. There was a smile of satisfaction on the black face of the Turco, who had fallen back exhausted. We unbuckled the straps which held the German's stretcher and slipped it out, but he was already dead. While we were examining him the two Turcos said a few words to each other, and when we were about to start forward they both refused to ride with a dead German in the car. Before we were done with him we had to carry the corpse to the side of the road and bury it there.

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We folded up the stretcher, put it back into the car, and again set out. When we got to the hospital several miles farther on, we lifted out the stretchers, but one of the Turcos was dead. He had used up all his strength and life in the great effort he had put forth to kill the hated German, but the other one said he was very contented, and had died willingly and gladly.

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Such little incidents of different kinds are continually happening, where millions of men from all classes of society and with different ideals are thrown together, and I am sure any ambulance on the Western front could tell many a thrilling tale if it but had the power. Perhaps it is better that it can not speak.

CHAPTER XIII

A TICKLISH ATTACK

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At one time I was called upon to go to the city of A— on a particular errand. While there I had a unique experience. I had gotten a permit allowing me to remain there over night, which, speaking accurately, allowed me to leave next day. You have very little difficulty "staying" in a place as long as you stay, but if you do not have a permit you will have your troubles when you try to "leave" next day.

All permits in Europe today read "allowed to leave" such and such a place on such and such a day for another place.

Well, I had gotten my permit to leave A—on the following day, the 24th. I wandered around over the city viewing the destroyed portions and making the acquaintance of some womenfolk who ran a restaurant, and at last I found a hotel and went to sleep. The next morning after breakfast I left my hotel and made my way up the main street until I came to a narrow alley-like street with tall buildings on either side, into which I entered, bent on investigation. I had not gone more than a hundred feet down this street when I distinctly heard a *boom!*

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I did not pay much attention to it, for I thought it was likely some blasting in the vicinity, and presently I heard another *boom!*

I then looked about and saw a man ahead of me leading a horse hitched to a high-wheeled vegetable cart, heavily loaded. He was trying to run and drag along with him, horse, cart, and all. Everybody was running and—well—I guess I ran, too! I don't know just why I did—I know I wasn't scared! But some way a feeling inside of me told me I would rather be in some other place than there. If I was to be killed, I thought it would be more consolation to the folks at home if my body wasn't loaded down with hundreds of tons of brick and mortar. For nine and one-fifth seconds I beat the world's record.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

When I got out into the main street again and turned to get my breath, along with a good many other runners, I saw three airplanes dropping bombs down on the city at the rate of a hundred in a little over three minutes, and with the detonations and the reverberations of the anti-aircraft guns which were being fired, added to the explosions of the bombs themselves, it just seemed as though the entire atmosphere was raining bombs. And any way I went, a whole flock of the bombs followed me. I learned later that an important factory was destroyed and that forty people were killed. If they had told me forty thousand, I think I should have believed it. The feeling on such an occasion as this is indescribable. It is not like any ordinary bombardment when you know the enemy is letting you have it from only one side—the front. The sense of utter helplessness when you feel he is all about you and peppering you from a thousand angles isn't comfortable to say the least. That afternoon I strolled about the city taking in the ruined districts, and that evening I set off for my post, complying with the provisions of my pass. If I hadn't left then, I couldn't have gone at all without a lot of difficulty.

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CHAPTER XIV

THE DEATH OF A COMRADE

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On a certain Friday afternoon at M— the day had been ominously quiet. Several of the boys had gone out for a little stroll and lunch before retiring, and a few were hanging around the cars. The sun was sinking low in the west and appeared to be loath to drop out of sight. An orderly from the hospital came rushing over out of breath and told us to come quickly. Two boys went with me immediately and as we entered a darkened room we saw our old friend, Gaston, apparently "passing out." Some of us had been pretty well acquainted with him. We went in noiselessly but as soon as we stepped over the threshold he opened his eyes a little wider and smiled faintly. He looked so peaceful that we hated to disturb him. Speaking in a kind of hoarse whisper he said, "I sent for you. I am glad you came. You boys have been good to me and I wanted to thank you. I am lonesome, and I want my mother, too. Pneumonia has set in, but I'll be better—in—a—couple—of—days. How—is—the—battle—go—?" Here his eyes closed and he seemed to sleep. Yes, I can truthfully say he did find sleep. The sleep which knows no waking. But the room was so quiet and he looked so calm and happy as he lay there that it did not seem like death. It only seemed as if some white angel had come down and touched his tired, feeble body and transfigured him. Poor fellow, he had been gassed at the battle of Ypres, and we had met him at the hospital. Several times we had had good visits with him and neither he nor we surmised that his time was so near at hand. He had not appeared to be in pain and he always said he did not suffer. And he was so hopeful to the end.

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His life story had been a sad one. Married when very young he had been a farmer on one of those little places so common and yet so unique in France. Things had not gone well with him and his farm had almost been forfeited. He had a family of children but his little twin boy and girl had been killed in a runaway and the shock had prostrated his wife. She had been an invalid ever since. Years had gone by and then when the Germans came, a shell had struck his home killing

his wife in her bed and injuring his other boy. A few hours later the Germans entered the place, driving him out of his home, taking his farm. He had barely time to escape being captured, which would have meant service for Germany instead of for France. His heart had been saddened but he was glad to get away and go into the French Army and he had gone back to fight the Germans. He had gone through several battles without being injured but the gas caught him at Ypres. He lived sadly but died peacefully, and we were requested to be present at the last little service over what was earthly of him. They put him in a plain casket covered with a French flag and the procession started down toward the little church.

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At this time the Germans were bombing the district quite regularly. On reaching the graveyard we could see dozens of tombstones demolished, and one grave had thrown its occupant to the surface of the earth and it lay there a crumbling, rotting corpse—yet smiling, or at least so it seemed as the pearly white teeth were exposed to full view—smiling in derision, beyond the power of the German and his *Kultur*. Here Gaston was laid to rest.

But war furnishes strange contradictions. It is a continuous panorama of lights and shadows; of beauties and hideous monstrosities. It furnishes some of the truest and bravest acts that history records and it produces some of the foulest deeds of crime. Experiences are so varied. Some evenings, while loafing about the headquarters sitting at little tables writing letters or talking peacefully there was nothing whatever to remind us of battle. Beautiful parks were in front of us, fountains and flowers, and all was quiet and serene. Then a call would come and within an hour or two we would be enveloped in the harsh stern facts of war.

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After witnessing the death of our comrade and seeing the shattered cemetery and the decaying corpse sticking out of the grave, all in one day, I felt a bit weird myself. A man's nervous constitution isn't made of iron and even after seeing many morbid spectacles, unless he has become hopelessly hardened, he will still be affected by tragic experiences and brutal scenes. I didn't rest any too well that night after those creepy sensations and the next day my nerves were rather shaky. The grim spectacle which was now to greet my eyes did not tend to quiet me either.

I was sent on quite a long trip to bring in two wounded men of the Colonials, one French, the other British. These two men, Turko and Senegalese, proverbially speaking, were as black as the ace of spades. Neither of them was very dangerously wounded and both were talking cheerfully. One had a leg broken and the other had been caught in the shoulder. As we slid out the stretcher of the first man and placed it on the ground, his knapsack fell off and to my astonishment out rolled the head of a German soldier! The African spoke of it with great satisfaction, turning it over in his hands and boasting of his good fortune, as, I suppose the primitive American Indian boasted of the scalp dangling from his belt. The other fellow, not to be outdone, ran his hand into the cavernous depths of his pocket and brought forth a human eye. It was a ghastly looking object. It seemed to me to be penetrating the soul of the Colonial, but he just laughed and enjoyed very much my discomfiture.

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One evening as I was about to "hit the hay," two wounded men came in on foot from the front. They were so weak they could drag themselves along no farther. I was requested to take them to a hospital which was some distance from the place. I got my car ready and saw that everything was right. The night was dark as pitch. The men were put on a *brancard*, or stretcher, and placed in the ambulance. We were making our way toward our destination when we came to a piece of road running through a cut in the hilly country. The road was rather narrow, just allowing enough room for two vehicles to pass. On either side was a great bank fifteen or more feet high. Right in the main part of the cut was a mudhole perhaps a hundred feet or more in length. When we came to this place we were suspicious of it and stopped for a few moments to consider before making the plunge. As we did so a line of motor lorries and soldiers came down from the other direction. I was afraid it was too daring an enterprise but two or three of the trucks got safely through and my fears began to be allayed. A truck now came loaded high with ammunition cases and just behind it two men on horses. Into the mudhole plowed the ammunition truck, and the riders followed close behind. The mud was getting deeper and deeper and the wheels began to clog. An awful tattoo sounded as the driver threw in the low speed and tried to pull ahead. The boys on horseback turned out to go around the truck, which was evidently sticking. As they did so its rear wheel struck a rock and broke short off, upsetting the entire load. In falling down, the shell cases frightened the horses. One of them reared and fell, throwing the rider right under the overturning truck. He was fatally crushed. The soldiers coming up extricated the poor fellow from the wreckage and brought him to our ambulance. I quickly saw that he was "done in." He could talk a little, and he said that it was foolish to attempt to ride around the truck in the narrow space, especially where the mud was so deep.

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We doubled back part way on our journey and made a detour. But the mangled man died before we reached our destination. We delivered the other wounded and made the return trip with little difficulty. Later on many soldiers came in on foot over that piece of road but they said that the other trucks had all turned back and gone around another way. They did not dare to brave that awful mudhole. These soldiers were dirty, worn and battle-weary for they had walked from the trenches for miles through the mud, and they plainly showed it too. There was not a spot as big as your hand on them that was not dyed with that cream-colored mud and their faces were speckled with it so that they looked almost as if they had had the smallpox. As one of them turned to leave me, he uttered the words, "Some mud."

CHAPTER XV ON AN OLD BATTLE GROUND

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In a certain section of the country one could see from a prominent hill across some cities and onward to the edge of the German lines. The region has been much fought over and in fact is an old battle ground. One terribly drizzly day it became necessary to go over to a nearby village to evacuate a hospital. Wild tales had come in about the "strafing" which the town was being subjected to and we were immediately ordered to hurry to the spot. It was said that the Germans were shelling the place with "H. E.'s" from a distance of about twenty miles, with shells of fifteen and seventeen inch caliber. If there is anything which will put the fear of God in a man it is the explosion of one of those "big fellows."

From the frightened faces of the men who had just come from there, I think the whole town had suddenly become a God-fearing people—since six o'clock that morning. They told us that hundreds of people had been killed and that many buildings were in flames. Well, we went to our car and tried to start it but it would not crank. We tried everything we could think of but it was of no use. The chilly night evidently had cooled the engine too much. We heated a kettle of water and fed it into the radiator and poured it over the carburetor. This helped some, for she sputtered a little but the engine did not take enough gas to turn over. Finally after I had taken out all the spark plugs and given them a good cleaning with gasoline, I cranked up and she started off with a bang.

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All this time the men who had come in from the burning village had been urging us to hurry. Their impatience added so much to our nervousness that it made us almost angry. Any man who has motor trouble will appreciate it. At last we started the ambulance. Just as we were going out the gate—whish! We picked up a tack and our rear tire was flat! It took me about eight minutes to take off that tire and put a new one on, but it seemed like hours. The men who had been telling us how to do it now climbed into the back of the car and went along with us. We had been on the road only a few minutes when we met a man coming down the road pulling behind him a two-wheeled cart. He raised his hands as a signal to stop. We did. Then, with tears streaming down his face, he began to talk to us, pointing to the cart which was covered with old rag carpet. At last he lifted the carpet and showed us the lifeless body of a woman, of his wife! The body was horribly mutilated, the head and right arm were entirely gone and the left hand was blown to shreds. As the poor man looked at the corpse he became fairly frantic, screaming and moaning. We tried to say some words of sympathy but the only answer he could give us was, *O, ma femme! ma femme!* We climbed out of the car and while we stood there an old man and a little girl came trudging up—the daughter and father of the woman. They, too, began to cry. Suddenly the old man reeled and fell to the ground. When we picked him up he was dead. He had died of a broken heart. We lifted his body into the cart beside that of his daughter. I never felt so heartless in my life as I did when we left that man and little girl to stumble on with their burden of sorrow.

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When we reached the village, the situation confirmed all the rumors. The shelling had stopped, but the burning of the buildings was almost as bad. We drove down the street to the public square and just then over on the opposite corner a large caliber shell came crashing in, striking a school building, exploding and producing a fearful effect. Twelve children were killed and the entire schoolhouse destroyed. The force of these large projectiles is almost inconceivable. Very often a single one will completely annihilate an entire building, reducing it to a pile of bricks, dust and kindling wood. I have seen one of them practically demolish two houses separated by several feet.

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Well, at last we got to the hospital. Shells had burst around it but none had struck it as yet, and the few people who were there were badly frightened. We carried a load of wounded back to the base and with the help of the other ambulances after several hours we evacuated the hospital. Before the work was finished, however, the Germans had shelled the road and it became a difficult matter to pick our way along and dodge the craters. A shell burst just in front of one of the cars and covered the driver with fine pieces of stone and dust.

As evening drew on the great volcano-like explosions from the guns in the distance lighted up the sky and made an inspiring and awful spectacle. As the guns belched forth their messages of death one might have thought he was in the midst of a hundred powder factories which were exploding periodically. There was something fascinating about it all, yet frightful, but as I reflected on the capacity for ruin and death which those engines of war possessed, I thought I would prefer to be farther away. The firing ceased as night came on and the atmosphere cleared up. A wonderful red moon rose in the heavens above those awful scenes and for some brief hours brought a feeling of peace and calm.

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CHAPTER XVI THE VERDUN ATTACK—LIFE AND DEATH

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Multitudes of people without doubt would like to know what an attack is like, consequently I will try to describe one in the region of Verdun. After serving six hours' notice on the city the Germans' big guns opened up, with large caliber shells at short intervals. Frightened by the

fearful bombardment the civil population in multitudes swarmed out of the town and took to the country roads. Thousands of trucks and numbers of guns and soldiers advancing towards the enemy passed these fleeing people. Many *camions* slipped off the road, turned over, smashed, and were left there, but the procession moved on and on. Horses died and were left to rot on the roadside. Yet the procession bent on grim business never paused. The routes of travel were jammed with soldiers and the rumble and roar of the monster guns of the Teutons dinned into one's ears the message that the world was locked in a death struggle.

Men and munitions are the only things that count in such an hour; and at Verdun in those perilous times so many thousands of noble men were wounded and cast aside that inconceivable numbers were required to take their places and fill the ranks. Such is the wonderful spirit of France that men always are ready to fill the gaps in the line. They go gladly and I believe they will sacrifice thus until the very end.

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Peasants were passing by in haste, dragging two-wheeled push carts loaded with the baubles which they counted dear, but which in death are of little value. Coming and going, coming and going, the two processions moved through the weary hours, and still on the horizon the mouths of Hell belched forth their smoke and fire, and across the field was heard the awful rumbling of the guns. Many different kinds of shells were used, producing different effects which could be distinguished by the various colors of smoke emitted in exploding. They also filled the air with strange and nauseating odors, and the crumbling houses sent up enormous clouds of dust.



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AMERICAN AMBULANCES ON THE ROAD TO THE FRONT.

The cars of the Ambulance Field Service rush through maelstroms of shrapnel and high explosive shells to succor the wounded, and then brave the same dangers to get them to the base hospitals in time to relieve their wounds.

Without warning out of the night came a battery of guns with a clatter of horses' hoofs and clamor of wheels on the pavement, and in a few brief moments the sky lighted up with hellish explosions, and then died down again. As the night deepened, regiments of soldiers tramped by and passed out of sight. Then from the distance came the awful roar of a fearful "strafing."

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The war hospital during a battle is a fearsome place and it always smells strongly of chloroform and ether. At the door of one of them the *brancardiers* carry the body of a man who has made a heroic struggle in the race against death. His head is battered fearfully and death has won the race. But then—what is death? The commonest figure that stalks around on the earth today. And, after all, it is not so terrible. A little sooner, or a little later, it comes. All must die. Death is not the dreadful thing, nor even the important thing. It is true, as the poet Cooke has said, "It's not the fact that you're dead that counts, but only how did you die."

I am not preaching in this story. I do want to say, however, that death is not important. Death is not an enemy; not on the Western front. Thousands of better men than we, yes, millions, have met this same fellow and boldly gone with him. They all go, but how did you die? That's it. Let the German answer.

Verdun is an old fort and reputed to be one of the most formidable fortifications in the world. Had it not been so it would certainly have been crushed like an eggshell before the German onslaught, for a dozen shells often exploded at the same time, blowing up many buildings, yet the fortress never weakened for an instant. If Verdun had fallen, nothing could have stood. But as Victor Hugo says of Waterloo, "God was passing by and He took charge of things." To our little minds it is all mysterious. Wonderful are the ways of His working, but through one agency or another He always thwarts the designs of evil men and has His way at last.

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Verdun was most important. In every war there are certain battles which the historian calls "strategic," certain points which are pivotal, and the outcome of the engagement there is particularly vital. The history and destiny of nations hangs upon them. Such a one was Waterloo a

century ago. Gettysburg in the Civil War was another one. In this present struggle the Marne and Verdun have been the outstanding pivotal battles, but they were won! Won by the French, who, as I look at it, were held up and led on by the very hand of God. I am not a military expert, and I have no knowledge or insight that other folk do not possess, but it is my inward judgment that from this time on the battles will be fought east of Verdun. That is to say in the main, I doubt very much if the Germans will push through much farther than they are already and I believe that little by little the Allies will crowd them back along the greater portion of the front until victorious. The world must bear in mind, however, that Germany is by no means weak and that she will not be vanquished without an awful struggle. She may also at places advance her line somewhat, but I think no one need now fear as many did in the beginning that Paris will ever be taken, or that Verdun will fall. It has stood the supreme test!

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One must remember, however, that Verdun today is not a beautiful sight. The forts are still intact and from a military point of view that is all that counts. But from an artistic or aesthetic standpoint, the place is sorry indeed. When the Germans sent over their incendiary bombs setting the buildings on fire, and then their hail of shrapnel so the fire could not be put out, they accomplished sad destruction. Broken pieces of glass, bits of shell and upturned cobblestones fill the streets, and battered carts and wagons lie everywhere. Houses are smashed to pieces and smoke-blackened brick and charred timbers, the worthless remains of burned buildings are seen on every hand. From the individual viewpoint Verdun is very sad, extremely so. Thousands of people have been driven from their homes and when they left they had to say good-bye to those homes forever. Multitudes have had loved ones killed while others have lost track of their relatives and probably will never find them. Beautiful edifices, the fulfilment of the artists' dream, have been battered and burned down, and in that city at the present moment Art is not! All this is lamentable.

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Yet from the larger point of view, that of France, Verdun is a glorious triumph. From the national and even the world standpoint, Verdun means one more thwarting of the tyrant's design and one more victory for Truth and Right. When we rise above today, and look at things in the light of human progress, our value judgments alter much. The world will not care much whether this or that individual lost his house or farm, for a ruined city will rise again, but the heart of the world leaps with joy when it realizes that the despot has been checked! And even the French individual possesses such an indomitable spirit of patriotism that he will not mourn for his temporal losses just so the future of France is not impaired. The long sacrifice and the enduring suffering are borne by these patient people with remarkable calm. They endure today in silence, their Calvary of war, the bloody Golgotha of France.

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Yet I would not have you think that war is all battle. Not all of the hours nor even the days of the men in the war country are taken up with thoughts of horror, or in listening to the explosions of shells, or the carrying of mangled or lacerated men. The war is so gigantic in its operation and it covers so vast an area that millions of the people engaged find themselves many times occupied with the most peaceful thoughts and the most commonplace pursuits. If all of the people engaged were compelled continually to face the cannon and the barbed wire, or to listen to the moans of the dying, and feel that they themselves were apt to be taken off at any minute, they would not be the cool-headed people that they are, but instead would be a crowd of raving maniacs. The person thousands of miles away from the spectacle who only reads about it often gets a wrong impression on this point. Nations are mobilized; multitudes are under arms; thousands are engaged in assisting those who fight intermittently—and no soldier fights except intermittently, a week or so on and several days off—and, consequently, not infrequently there are hours or even days when one takes the even tenor of his way far from the battle front, much the same as he does in times of peace.

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On such an evening, I found myself writing a letter, as letters to me of late had been rather scarce. I was sitting in a plain, bare hut with a kerosene lamp, and a peculiar letter it was that I wrote. I had seen some odd writing paper in a little stationery store and had paid a couple of cents for three or four sheets of it. Each sheet was arranged by the manufacturer so as to make a complete letter. If you were to take an ordinary sheet of paper and perforate it on the sewing machine on all four sides about half an inch from the edge, then put some mucilage on that half inch margin and let it dry, folding it across the middle, you would have a piece of this one-letter stationery. As it happened there was a little wording on the outside, and a square for the postage stamp. All you have to do is to write the address on the outside, open it out, pen your missive inside, fold it and wet the edges all the way round, thus sticking it, and you then have your letter so to speak, on the inside of your envelope and the receiver simply tears off the perforated edges, opens it up, and reads.

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I was writing on this odd French stationery after a day of idleness. My table consisted of two boards thrown across a couple of sawhorses—a very comfortable table by the way, but the kerosene lamp smelled badly. My thoughts were of America and home. I was in a soliloquizing mood and I also wanted the letter as a souvenir, when I returned. And so I began:

My dear sir, self: U. S. A., When you receive this epistle you will be far away from the scenes which now confront you. You may sometimes think you have it pretty hard staying out here in France away from home and loved ones, having no money, dead broke, and laboring without pay, and often getting little time to rest or sleep. But listen, son, you must realize that you are at this hour in the very midst of the biggest crisis of history. The world has never seen such a moment and if you had missed having a part in it you would have kicked yourself throughout eternity. Your own little life anyway is

not an important thing to the world. A few dollars more and a position of ease doesn't make any difference, and if you learn the lesson, my boy, that giving yourself in a noble cause and living for others, is the greatest thing in life you will have found happiness and gained all things. Please take this little suggestion in the proper spirit and set it to work. Also remember that never again in your life will you ever get a reception from anyone which is so beautiful as that which the French people are giving you right at this hour....

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At this moment the door opened and a hurry call was brought in for three hundred wounded. A great battle had been fought and our boys were needed at once. I stuck the letter in my pocket and went out. In ten minutes we were on the road. Arriving in the night at the station where the men were to be brought in we were told that the train would not arrive for at least an hour and we knew that that might mean six hours, as it often did. Things were fairly quiet here, but now and then we saw the shell flashes and occasionally heard the booming of the guns. I went into a little structure nearby prepared to wait as long as need be. While sitting there I got out my odd French stationery and began finishing that letter to myself. I wrote:

And may that beautiful French hospitality always be a bright spot in your life. And when your time comes to "shuffle off this mortal coil," whether violently or peacefully, may you remember that many a better man out here has done so courageously for a heroic cause. Take this to yourself. Good-bye.

Sincerely,

YOUR FRIEND.

I folded the top of the letter down over the bottom and wet the edges with my tongue, pressing them together, and put it in my pocket ready to mail. I had just turned around when—rip—bang—a monstrous bomb burst right in the block where I was sitting, tearing a hole fifteen inches in diameter right through the roof, and totally enveloping everyone in blinding, choking dust. The concussion put out the candle and as I had no matches, I just sat there half dazed for several minutes coughing and sneezing and wondering what was coming next. Finally I rubbed my eyes and felt my way out of the place, only to find that one of the cars had been smashed to toothpicks by the shell as it went off.

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As I met one of the boys he said, "Where were you?" I answered, "Inside writing a message to myself—but it was a more thrilling message to myself that came, in the way of that explosion."

"Well, I should think so," he replied. "Hereafter you had better not bother writing to yourself; next time I'd write to the other fellow." And I thought it was pretty good philosophy.

Half an hour later the trains came in, bearing the wounded in numbers. By working until one o'clock next day without any food, we finally got the wounded cared for and distributed, there being 400 of them instead of 300 as first reported. Providence, however, appears to have seen to it that men do not suffer when engaged in work of this kind, and I never heard any of the men complain of being hungry. Sometimes, however, at the stations, kind women provided coffee and sandwiches for the ambulance men as well as for the wounded, and when this was so they never went amiss.

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Back at headquarters one day an amusing incident occurred. I had bought a beautiful French pipe sometime before which I valued greatly. It happened, however, that I had gone out one afternoon and left it lying on my bed, which consisted of a straw mattress on the floor. While I was gone a couple of French poilus had come in to chat with the other boys. One of the poilus had been imbibing a bit and was feeling pretty good, I guess. He sat down on my bed and two of our boys did the same, thinking to talk and have a little fun with him. While the Frenchman was sitting there his eye fell upon that pretty pipe of mine and he picked it up admiringly, hinting to the boys that he would like to have it. They told him it was not theirs but they felt sure that the owner would not care if he took it. So he put it in his pocket with a wink and laid his cheap, smelly one in its place. He then noticed a little yellow cap on the bed. It was a sort of skullcap affair which the boys all wore when sleeping to keep their heads warm. When Mr. Poilu saw it he expressed a desire to have it also. The boys told him the cap belonged to me but they knew I would willingly let him have it. He took the cap and presently went out.

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Imagine my chagrin on returning at being told that one of the poilus had taken my treasured pipe and my nightcap! I did not care so much for the cap but I was very sorry to lose the pipe. I knew that the boys would not be able to identify this one man among all those hundreds who wore long blue coats and red trousers. But fortune was kind. Early the next morning when we were going to breakfast, we passed a large crowd of poilus, and one of our boys began to laugh. He called out, "Benson, there goes your nightcap!" And sure enough, on the head of a poilu, sticking down below his military cap, was the yellow edge of my nightcap. That identified my man, and I rushed gleefully over and smilingly said in my execrable French, "Monsieur, I believe I have your pipe," holding it up to his gaze. He took it, saying, "Yes; thank you." But he did not offer me my pipe, and there was an embarrassing pause. After a moment I said, "Perhaps, Monsieur, you have my pipe?" He smiled again and said, "Yes," and fished it out of his pocket. We both laughed, and I felt so good that I did not ask him for the cap. He's welcome to it. But as for the pipe, I now prize it more highly than before.

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CHAPTER XVII BARRAGE, OR CURTAIN FIRE

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At this juncture let me run over the development of barrage fire as military critics look upon and explain it.

Petain, the great French general, has given expression to one of the outstanding facts of the present war. He says, "The artillery conquers, the infantry occupies." This, in a few words, is the explanation of that new method of attack by "barrage" or, as the English call it, "curtain fire."

This system of attacking the enemy is a new one and has proven most effective for the Allies. In a nutshell, it creates what might be called a danger zone, or, better still, a death zone, just in front of the advancing soldiers. As the soldiers move on ahead the barrage moves on, or it may be more proper to say that the soldiers move just as slowly as the curtain of fire moves, for if they do not, fatal consequences follow. If they should go too fast they would run into the barrage and would be killed by their own artillery, which is in the rear of the trenches. Occasionally a soldier becomes too enthusiastic and goes too fast for the barrage, and then disaster follows. Accuracy, in time and in range, is the one thing which must be most strictly observed by the men who are conducting the barrage hundreds of yards back of the line.

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These men project a hail of shells over the heads of their own infantry and across a thin strip of land parallel to the enemy's trench and directed in the first place at his barbed-wire defenses. This line or belt of bursting shells must be so fierce and continuous as to make it impossible for any man to go through it, or at least so perilous and costly to life that no one in his proper senses would try the hazardous experiment. It requires a rapid firing gun for this kind of warfare, and as armies have not had such guns heretofore, of course, the barrage fire was unknown. It is one of the new things that have been evolved during this war. The French *soixante-quinze*, or "seventy-five millimeter," has been the marvel in gun making which has made this curtain fire possible. It is a gun which shoots very rapidly, which does not displace itself each time it shoots, and which is able to discharge an average of twenty-five three-inch shells every minute without greatly heating up. No gun was ever invented before which could accomplish such a feat.

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The older four-inch gun of the French Army, which the seventy-five displaced, could never have shown the efficiency in this direction that the *soixante-quinze* demonstrates. In the first place its rate of shooting was much too slow, but even if it had been a great deal faster a continuous accuracy was impossible. When it was first aimed its fire could be carefully controlled, but the trouble with it was it threw itself out of place every time it shot. The recoil from such guns is very considerable and the older gun made no provision for it, consequently it had to be aimed all over again every time it was fired because the rebound caused it to dig into the earth and change its entire position. The new *soixante-quinze* makes careful provision for this factor of recoil and is fitted up like a Ford car with shock absorbers, so that it is ready for the second shot as soon as the first is fired, and for the third as soon as the second is fired. It maintains a fixed position, accelerating very greatly the speed at which it can be fired at any given target. The old four-inch gun fell down just here. The result was that its highest rate of speed was only a quarter of that which could be attained when a field piece was invented, absorbing its recoil and thus leaving its position unchanged. The only limit to the speed of the new gun, therefore, is the rate at which it can be loaded and the degree of temperature it can stand without exploding shells prematurely, but even this latter danger is provided for in this gun, thus keeping it to the minimum. The only elements that prevent absolute accuracy today are slight differences in the shells or perhaps a change of wind, which are, however, practically negligible factors.

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Formerly, in the use of the other gun there was the personal variation of the man who aimed the gun quickly, after each shot had displaced or disarranged it, and the other man who assisted him. Each new aiming and shooting of the piece required an absolutely distinct series of movements and thus for every shot there was that much more possibility of error on account of the imperfect coordinating of the two men engaged. In this connection let me say that the curtain fire, which was evolved by the modern quick firing seventy-five, was very soon discovered and quickly adopted and utilized by Germany also.

When first used the purpose of curtain fire was simply to guard or make possible the forward movement of the infantry and was kept well ahead of them, usually one or two hundred yards. It was also uniform all along the line as far as it extended; that is, if it moved ahead a hundred feet at one point it moved the same amount at every other point. It is a ticklish thing at first for men to advance upon the enemy's trenches with their own artillery booming away at their rear and shooting right over their own heads. But the trenches are seldom parallel. Often the country is rough and whereas the enemy may be dug in a hundred yards away at one point, it may be that fifty rods farther down the lines, the trenches are three hundred yards apart. In the main we speak of the lines being parallel, but as a matter of fact they very seldom are so.

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During the early days of the war if one of the opponents were going to make an attack he hammered the enemy's position with heavy guns which were concealed or camouflaged perhaps five miles behind the front line trenches. The bombardment lasted until it was assumed most of the enemy's soldiers had taken refuge in the dugouts and were so disorganized that they could not effectively resist. Besides this his trenches would be so battered that the chances of success for the well-planned assault would be the best. The time must be accurately arranged previously. All lieutenants and captains who directed the barrage must keep exact time and have watches

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timed to the second. My own brother, Brenton, is now a lieutenant of artillery and I had the pleasure of presenting him with a beautiful stop-watch before he went into action.

At the given signal the barrage raised and the doughboys went over the top, hustled down the lanes which had been previously cut in their own barbed wire by the wiring party, made their way across No Man's Land, stooping low as they went, dropping flat to the ground every few yards, and trying to get to the trenches of the enemy before they could be stopped.

But the machine guns of the enemy were found to be too formidable and destructive, and as a result of this experience they learned to use the light artillery which could continue its fire even while the attacking party were moving on, advancing as they advanced. The lighter field pieces were placed within a few hundred yards in the rear of the trenches and used to blind the Germans from protecting themselves, as well as to cover the advancing troops until they took the trench. Then the curtain fire was thrown still farther back behind the German line.

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This process plainly was a very delicate one, even in its beginning. It seemed a little nervy to order soldiers to advance while above their heads hissed and barked their own gunners' shells. Sometimes these would burst before they got to the curtain line and casualties would inevitably result. It was rather ticklish business for the men to charge forward even if they were a couple of hundred yards behind such a hail of steel.

Soon, however, another improvement was put into effect and that was to shorten the barrage to sixty yards, letting the soldiers advance with the exploding shells nearer and nearer to their own bodies. Of course, there was great advantage in this, as the closer the troops were to the curtain fire ahead, the better they were protected and the shorter was the time after the curtain was lifted until the troops occupied the trench. Cutting this time down to the minimum made it so much harder for the Germans to emerge from their hiding and resist the oncoming troops. The science of this was at last so well worked out that a gap of less than forty yards lay between the curtain and the troops and sometimes only thirty yards which could be covered in a couple of seconds after the barrage was lifted. Time, of course, is the chief element in the endeavor to get the bulge on the other fellow.

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Finally the British worked out what they call the "creeping barrage." This takes into account the fact that the trenches are never exactly straight and parallel. But here the camera came to the aid of the Allies and it told them just how much deviation from the parallel there was. From these photographs the relative positions of the trenches at any given point were plotted out accurately, showing the irregular shape of No Man's Land and the variation of its width at all the different places. The Allies then dug identical trenches in the rear and practiced on them. This changed the method of curtain fire from "regular" to "creeping." From that time the barrage started in a line which first followed the shape of our own fire trench, but as it moved forward the configuration was altered and it swayed and wriggled like a snake gradually taking the shape of the enemy's trench. Plainly, it required much deeper skill to employ this method, but its advantages were great. Instead of all the gunners shooting in unison at a single command, each one had a different job to perform in order to make the barrage conform with the angle which the trenches made. This is now the general method and has been brought up to a marvelous degree of accuracy as well as speed.

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At practically the same time the creeping barrage was conceived, another idea which has also been extremely useful was developed. This was the second curtain of fire to be thrown in the rear of the enemy's trenches to cut off his retreat and to prevent the coming up of reinforcements. The first curtain covered your advance and hindered his resistance, and the second one beyond him kept new forces from coming to his aid with food, munitions, and information.

The method which is used almost universally in attacking today, then, is this.

Big guns "prepare" the way by hammering the trenches of the enemy and simultaneously driving him to the dugouts and bashing in the trenches which shelter him. Your doughboys then go "over the top" and advance, covered by the curtain fire, at first conforming in shape to their own trenches, and little by little wriggling into the form of the enemy's trenches as it comes nearer to them. Closely following the moving barrage is your infantry. Then another barrage in the enemy's rear is cutting him off from reinforcements and after a time the trench is captured and perhaps many prisoners taken. It is not hard to understand from this modern method of attack what the French general meant when he said, "The artillery conquers, the infantry occupies."

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**ALLIED TROOPS CHARGING THROUGH BARBED-WIRE
ENTANGLEMENTS.**

**The fighters are under the protection of a perfect
barrage. They have just gone over the top and are
nearing the enemy's trenches.**

Barraging on the field today is much the same as running a great ocean liner. The man who sees is not the man who does! The lookout or observer has nothing to do with the actual control of the vessel. The battery on the field is pulled up into position by horses, then lined up for action and the horses are hurried back to a safe place. The lieutenant directs the fire and the gunners do the firing, but no one sees his target or his results. Just behind them, a telephone operator receives the messages, sitting perhaps, in a shell hole or a dugout. The battery commander is the man who really bosses the whole job from his observation post. He is well named because he really commands the battery, though from a position perhaps miles in front of the battery. The lieutenant is always listening as the telephone operator is getting his instructions from the commander at the front. In the first place the lieutenant learns roughly the direction in which to shoot, but soon he gets more detailed direction before firing his first shot, which is in reality an experiment. Standing a short distance behind the battery, he plainly sees every gun. Then he shouts, "Ready!" When the command to fire comes over the telephone he issues a signal. The man at the first gun raises his hand, five seconds are counted, and as he drops his hand the gun is fired. Gun number two does the same and so on down the line. The gunner cannot see and does not know anything about the result. The man at the telephone calls out, "Battery has fired."

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The only man in all this operation who gives orders and sees results is the battery commander. Usually he can see the target clearly. Sometimes, however, when this is not possible the balloon and the airplane have to do it for him. The battery commander with the telephone operator in his rear knows exactly the way the guns are pointed and the distance to be covered. He can estimate quickly and figure up the necessary corrections, and this message may go back to the battery, "One hundred yards over and fifty yards to the right." The sergeants then again revolve their control wheels.

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The Good Book says, "A great ship is turned about by a very small helm." And so does a great gun respond very quickly to the most delicate touch of the wheel. The gauge is very fine and accurate and a hair's difference there means rods of difference where the shell falls. If the initial shot went a hundred yards over, perhaps the second goes one hundred yards too short. The direction is correct. Again in obedience to a message from the commander the little wheels move, and the elevation of the gun is corrected. The third shell, perhaps, goes over fifty yards and the fourth fifty under. Very well, the range is somewhere between those last two shots. "Give 'em hell. Salvo!" shouts the lieutenant: salvo meaning the firing of all the guns at one time.

Sometimes it is not practical to have an observation post located so as to allow the commander of the battery to see the result and direct the shell fire. In this case he has a balloon which is fastened to the earth by a cable and sent up behind the lines and out of range of the Germans. At best it is an uncomfortable position to be in; hung up in a basket maybe four thousand feet above terra firma, with German fliers hovering about and trying to blow you into eternity. It's not soothing to the nerves to say the least, even though you know that if the balloon takes fire, you have a parachute to drop with.

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Again the enemy's battery may be situated so that the balloon man cannot find its location. In this case the airplane solves the problem, for it goes to any desired height, then scouts over the enemy's trenches and does the "spotting." Of course, communication with an airplane is not as easy as with a balloon which has wires running to it, but the airplane can send wireless messages down, which are received on the earth, and to make up for the impossibility of the aviator receiving them in return, owing to the noise of his powerful motor, the men on the ground use a system of signals like the wigwag flag method. This is done by large panels which are in distinct contrast to their background, and move according to a certain code.

CHAPTER XVIII THE RAGPICKER

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The salvage from a modern battle is a thing which I suppose few people ever stop to think about. Where hundreds upon hundreds of thousands of men have been engaged in shooting iron and steel as fast as they can fire it, the amount of these metals which lies about is something almost beyond conception. And the amount too, which buries itself beneath the surface of the earth is enormous. The money value and military worth of these vast quantities of metal is also a thing which must be taken into consideration. A battle field today is little less than a great ocean of craters which oftentimes touch one another. Most people, if they thought about it at all, would take it for granted that this debris, this wastage, has gone back to earth from whence it came, there to remain until the elements in the soil and water disintegrate and metamorphose the metals from their present form back to their original state in the bowels of the earth. But this is usually not the case.

Walking over a battle ground after a severe fight you may see thousands of shells which have never been shot because the regiment to which they belonged was obliged to retreat posthaste, leaving these as well as other valuable material behind. Frequently the Germans, having been forced out of their positions, have abandoned thousands of unexploded shells and hand grenades. Bayonets lie around topsy-turvy and helmets by the hundreds are to be seen on every hand. Modern rifles dropped by hands that will never hold another and cartridges not fired because the company went forward, perhaps when the Germans beat a hasty retreat, are the commonest of sights upon almost every battle field in Europe. Certainly all of this necessary and vital material cannot be wasted. It must not be allowed to lie unused when it is so essential to the army.

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Instead, it is picked up and sorted out, classified and cleaned, and prepared to be used again. Much of it is too dangerous to be left lying about and most of it is too valuable to be ignored. Therefore squads of men are organized, made up oftentimes of the older soldiers, and a few days after an engagement you can see them groping about the earth and stooping over the shell-scarred ground carefully examining it in a most minute and painstaking manner.

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In America the scavenger, the ragpicker, and the garbage man are looked upon as very low in the scale of social refinement, but these ragpickers of the battle field are honored and respected by the French Army, because they are conserving the materials which are most vital to the success of the Republic. Much risk is also encountered in this work of salvage and not infrequently these men lose their lives, for shells from the German guns often go beyond their mark.

When stores of supplies are found in good condition, of course they are used at once, if possible, but much of the material must be sent back in motor lorries to be sorted and remade. Some conception of the economic saving accomplished by this work may be formed when you consider that after one battle many tons of copper were gathered up and loaded and sent back to the rear. Thousands of tons of steel and iron were also rescued in the same locality and in addition hundreds of rifles with millions of rounds of ammunition. Of course these materials are remolded and then go back once more to Mother Earth where much of it will again be picked up. At the close of the war, the land which is now being fought over will be of little value for agricultural purposes because it has been so tortured and mangled by the digging of trenches and the gougings of the shell holes, but it will be exceedingly valuable on account of the steel and copper which are buried there.

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Scientists tell us that nothing is in reality ever lost or wasted and a battle field gives a most striking illustration of this law of the indestructibility of matter. We are prone to say that war is all waste, and that the enormous quantities of iron and steel, trees and horses (and even men), which are used up become a fearful waste in nature. Yet it is literally true as a thoughtful Irishman said to me in France, "Nature protects the land." In other words, Mother Earth from which everything comes protects and perpetuates herself so that no nation or generation can destroy her. All trees which are battered to pieces and all the flesh which decays and rots, go back to earth once more to fertilize and season it so that in the next generation it will bring forth and bear plentifully. As the Good Book says: "All go to one place; all is of the dust. The body returneth to the earth as it was and the spirit returneth unto God who gave it."

There is no waste in the material universe. The only waste which comes from war materially is for the present generation in that things which were in a form which we could use have been changed to a form less useful but which will be used sometime again. The great waste of war as I look at it is the moral and spiritual waste where men become fiends and go out to conquer and steal and rape and kill, thus using up their spiritual powers and possibilities in destructive enterprises which might have been put toward constructive elevation of the race. Men lose their souls instead of saving them. And yet—the fiendishness of one country brings out the angel of the other in causing men to rouse to duty and to honor and justice, whereas without this incentive who knows but that we might sink down in self-sufficiency and retrograde, thus all of us losing our souls? It seems that all through God's universe there is struggle and strife, and that moral and spiritual fiber require these things for their best development.

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The work of Christ, Christianity, prospered because it had to struggle for existence, and when a nation or an individual ceases to struggle it goes backward. This thought may be a Job's comforter to those who pay the fearful price and yet we must look at it in this way. Men must fight to get the highest freedom, not lie back and accept their fate, else they have only the

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freedom of the Germans under the Hohenzollerns. There is always some remnant of salvage out of the most fearful waste. Thus earth goes in a cycle.

CHAPTER XIX CAMOUFLAGE

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The system of *camouflage* which the French have worked out in this war, is something new also. The word has come to mean in America "dodging," "deception," "bunk," or anything that is not out in the open and above board; and that is just what *camouflage* means in the war in France. It is a method by which things are made to appear to be what they are not, for the purpose of fooling the enemy. It makes an artificial thing seem to be a natural thing so that it will not excite suspicion and draw his fire. When the French place a battery of guns which naturally they do not want put out of commission by the enemy's guns, they have the *camouflage* artist get busy with his paint and canvas and create a whole lot of little trees or bushes just like the ones which grow in the ground and then under cover of darkness when the enemy can't see them, or when his attention is distracted, they plant the trees, place the guns behind them, and they have a concealed battery.

Snipers are also often hidden in this same kind of a manner. The *camoufleur* with his magic art of scenery makes a dead horse. He has his head stretched way out on the ground and his legs pointing up in the air, stiff and stark. A great hole or chunk has been torn out of his body, but as it happens, it is never right through the middle part of him because this would not leave protection for the sniper. The horse "conveniently" had the shell strike him on the side. He is placed wherever he will do the most good in the night time and Mr. Sharpshooter, with his noiseless rifle and plenty of ammunition and one day's food, crawls in behind him. There he stays till daybreak. Yes, and a long while after. He must stay there all day long until darkness again draws down a curtain of safety about him, for if he attempted to move out in daylight some sniper or machine-gun artist would instantly pick him off. If he lays low till dark he may fool them and get away all right.

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But the camera sometimes discovers things which the human eye would not detect, and the camera is always busy. The air flier might soar above a spot in the enemy's lines and not notice anything wrong or see that there was any object in addition to what was there the day before, but when he snapped the shutter of his camera and the photograph was developed, by comparing it with yesterday's photograph of the same place, he might see that there was an extra horse's carcass lying there. Now he knows there was no cavalry charge through the night, and so he becomes suspicious. Consequently the horse is watched. Perhaps in time, some one sees the man's arm protruding a little, or perhaps a man is picked off without any apparent cause.

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Just for luck the enemy takes a shot at the old dead horse and suddenly a man rises and tries to run back. But he stumbles and falls. He is killed. Perhaps he has accounted for a half a dozen Boches during the day and the Frenchman dies happy. That's what he's there for, to sacrifice his life for France in weakening Germany's cruel hold upon his country.

If it was certain that they could account for such a proportion of Germans, ten thousand Frenchmen would willingly step out tomorrow and go into sure death for *La Belle France* and Liberty! Very often they *camouflage* roads with evergreen trees so as to hide the view of the motor lorries and *camions* which are so essential in taking supplies and ammunition up to the front. An old forlorn and battered gun may *camouflage* a fine new field piece, and sometimes a weather-beaten, broken-down piece of farm machinery may be counterfeited in order to hide an observer, a listener, or a sniper. Such a man must be of a stout heart and not afraid to go over the Great Divide for it is full of hazard. If he is discovered it's all over for him.

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CHAPTER XX THE HEROISM OF THE WOUNDED

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One poor fellow whose feet were bare, attracted my attention. When I looked at him more carefully I noticed that he had no shirt and I asked him what had happened to him and what had become of his clothes. At first he did not want to tell me, but when I inquired again, with a kind of embarrassed and self-conscious look upon his face Louis related this tale to me.

His old acquaintance and fellow-townsmen, Paul, was in the same company with him. Back in the little home town before the war they had been enemies. They had both been bad men, crooks and drunkards, and had at one time tried to kill each other. For years they had hated and had as little to do with each other as possible. It all started over an insignificant something, but nevertheless the dislike had grown until it had become very bitter and each was continually on the lookout to find a chance to do the other a mean turn when possible. They had cursed each other many a time when their paths crossed, but as far as possible they had tried to avoid meeting. But when the war came they had been placed together side by side as comrades in the battle. Their officers had told them that they were not to think of self now, because their fight was for *La Belle France*.

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Day after day they drilled together and week after week performed the hard labor which was allotted them, side by side, until at last they outgrew their ancient antipathy, and finally became bosom friends. Then they were sent to the trenches. Together they held the line in the same fire bay, and hour after hour both looked into the muzzles of the German guns. They had on different occasions gone "over the top" together, and neither of them had been hurt at all. At last, however, early one morning when the Germans made a mighty charge, fate was against both. The bombardment had been blinding and when the Boches came tearing "over the top" these two sturdy poilus stood their ground and held the enemy back. A German was just about to make a lunge at Louis when Paul, with a spring, jumped in front of him, receiving a bayonet thrust in his lung, and also a terrible wound in his ankle. Louis had been painfully wounded in his left shoulder. His wound was not dangerous but Paul was about "done in," and was breathing hard as he had lost a large amount of blood from the hole in the lower part of his leg. Here the narrator's eyes began to fill with tears.

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"I couldn't let the poor fellow bleed to death after he had saved my life. I tore up my shirt into bandages and tied them around his leg, and then so they would not come off and also to keep his feet warm I took my socks and pulled them on his feet. What else could I do? I tried to fix up his injured lung also, but—" and then the tears burst forth and he sobbed like a baby. "It didn't do any good and Paul lies over there now." I glanced over in the direction where he pointed and sure enough there was Paul, bandaged up with strips of shirt and wearing a pair of socks over the bandages. But the black angel had already come to him. He had "gone West."

I talked with the man a little more and he opened up his heart to me. At best life is a strange thing to understand. Here were two human beings who previously, by heredity or environment, or else their own devilishness, had been evil characters. They were known as such by their acquaintances and they knew each other as such. Their lives had been unenviable to say the least, and then at last through war, that fearful and awful thing, each man had been made better and the angel had come out of what before seemed a devil. Not only was Paul a bad man but he had hated the other man and yet here he was doing a noble and self-sacrificing deed and not only that, but doing it for his enemy; giving up his life for his old foe.

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And here was the other man, showing a gratitude which was noble towards the man he had hated and who had tried to kill him. He gave up his own shirt and took off his own socks to try to keep warm the feet of the dying Paul and to keep the blood, which meant life, in his body. It did not accomplish the result but my narrator would not take back his socks as he said he wanted the man who died for him to have this little gift and be buried in them. Such heroism is not uncommon in the trenches.

After all there are some compensations even for war. In many instances it may bring out all the hate and the hell that is in a man's heart but I have also seen hundreds of cases where it made men much better than they had ever been before. It made them better men and better Christians; not necessarily of the shouting type but of the kind, of which One said: "He that giveth a cup of cold water to one of these little ones, shall not lose his reward," and again, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friend."

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But someone may think I am preaching. Well, if I am, I am preaching the gospel of service and sacrifice, which to my mind is the greatest gospel there is to preach at the present critical hour. I am trying to tell men that they can be better men wherever they are if they will it so. I have known men to go over there from various walks of life, some of them from wealthy homes and high salaried positions to engage in this or that line of work, perhaps relieving suffering without getting anything for their labor, and yet boast that they had received more than they had ever gotten in their lives before, and it was true. They developed a feeling of kinship for the suffering, and a satisfaction in assuaging their pain which was a greater compensation than anything they had ever had or could ever have expected. I have known men to go over in the very trenches themselves and there learn the lesson of self-control and humility which is in reality learning to respect the rights of other people; men who formerly had been accustomed to having their own way in life.

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A DRESSING STATION SET UP ON NEWLY CAPTURED

GROUND.

In a very short time after the capture of new territory not only do the infantry and the artillery move up to maintain the new position, but the first-aid dressing stations take their places on the newly captured ground also.

Out there tonight there are wealthy land owners standing knee deep in mud and water, side by side with their own stable boys and treating them on an absolute equality with themselves. It's a matter of life and death out there, and after all when it gets down to that very little else counts. A stable boy's bullet from the enemy's lines will pick off the wealthy magnate as quick as any other's, and the rich man's usefulness is no greater than his servant's, in the trenches. So they realize this fact and act as though it were true. The only place in all the world today where we have a real Brotherhood of Man is in the Allies' trenches on the Western front. Men display heroism there; but they don't know it. Men are brave out there; but they don't think of it. It never enters a man's head that he has been a hero, it's all duty, all just natural; they couldn't do otherwise. As the wounded Frenchman said about the worse wounded Paul, "I couldn't let that poor wounded fellow bleed to death." There was duty. It had to be done. "So I took my socks and pulled them on his feet. What else could I do?"

After all, heroism and heroes are not always shouted from the housetops and oftener they pass by unmentioned. But Someone knows. [Pg 122]

CHAPTER XXI THE TREACHEROUS "GERMAN SOUVENIR"

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The word "souvenir" means a remembrance. The Huns have certainly left a number of things which will be remembrances of them for a long time to come. At one of the battles near S— after a successful charge in which the French had succeeded in capturing the first and second line German trenches, the boys found some of these souvenirs. One of them, a lad of twenty-two, picked up a fountain pen which had apparently been dropped by some soldier in the hasty retreat. The young poilu started to examine the pen and in doing so unscrewed the cap from it. Just as he had it about off, an awful explosion occurred and the fellow's face was blown half off, and his right hand was torn to pieces. We carried him to the hospital where he was treated by the surgeons but he hardly came to consciousness and the next day died in horrible agony.

Two days later another Frenchman discovered a watch hanging on a nail. It was a cheap thing without any intrinsic value, but when he saw it he thought it would be a nice little relic of the war and reached up to take it down. It went off with a boom and as a result he has no eyes. That will be his remembrance of the savage Huns to his dying day. He had been through many months of war and seen much severe fighting, but the only thing he will remember about the enemy is their treachery. Sometimes in war even the vanquished will praise the gallantry and the bravery of the enemy and will acknowledge that the fight was a fair one, but all the way through the present conflict the evidence against the Germans has been more damning and conclusive than has been brought to light against the most savage peoples that ever lived. Primitive Indians have done some fearfully horrible deeds in days gone by, but the Indian never had a fraction of the ingenious power for devilry that the followers of Attila possess. A chair was found in one of the dugouts and when a soldier sat in it he was blown to atoms. There was not enough left of his body to be recognizable and the pieces were gathered together and buried in a nameless grave. [Pg 124]

One British Tommy started to move a shovel which was found to be connected with wires leading to a large amount of high explosives. It happened that the connection was not good and fortunately he received no harm, but he came within an ace of being blown to pieces. The Germans in their retreat left behind them poisoned food and flour and very often poisoned the water in the wells. No man is allowed to taste the water from any of the wells until it is thoroughly and carefully analyzed for strychnine and other deadly poisons. [Pg 125]

On one occasion some Frenchmen saw a picture hanging on the wall of a captured dugout. It was noticeably crooked and their first impulse naturally was to straighten it. For some reason they did not do so immediately, but a few minutes later a Belgian boy took hold of a corner of it to pull it straight. He was killed outright and several others were stunned by the terrific explosion which crumbled the walls and buried two men with earth. The shelling of cathedrals and the burning of homes are only insipid pastimes to the Germans.

Sometimes clocks are arranged and the explosions are delayed, and the clock will tick away for days before it sets off the treacherous bomb. The I. W. W. anarchists have nothing on the Huns for sneaking, murderous trickery. Germs of one kind and another were frequently discovered in bedding and hay, and all of it had to be burned. The placing of germs in court-plaster and bandages in this country is but a faint echo of the similar atrocious deeds done over there. [Pg 126]

Cases of high explosives were found under road beds, so that when any heavy weight passed over them they would go off. Men have now been appointed to study and investigate all these

suspicious murder traps and report them, for the double purpose of forewarning the Allied soldiers and of bringing undisputable evidence into the peace conference. These enemies of civilized man must not be allowed to emerge from this conflict without a day of reckoning for their deeds, whether they be good or whether they be evil. One good German I did know of on the Western front, and I will not withhold the highest praise from him. His name was Kellar. Together with another wounded German named Bauman he had been taken prisoner. They were both transported to the hospital and put into adjoining beds. The hospital physician was examining and caring for Bauman, and in doing so stepped over to a little stand for an instrument, whereupon Bauman drew a concealed revolver from under the sheet and shot the doctor. Everybody rushed up to see what was the matter, but hardly ten seconds passed before Kellar drew a revolver and shot Bauman dead. He then said that his company had orders to conceal their weapons and do such things, but he said he was human, and when he saw the kind and gentle doctor shot down by the patient whom he was caring for, it made him so mad that he didn't care if Bauman was a fellow-German, and so he shot him and was glad of it. That man ought to be an American.

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CHAPTER XXII THE NIGGER'S NOSE

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The surgeons in France are doing most wonderful things and it must not be forgotten, that along with all the awful phases of the war, with all the pathos and the horror, there are many brighter incidents and many humorous episodes.

For remember, the war today is just a national life. The whole existence of these countries is thrown into the war and for the time being, that is the natural course of life. So they live for war, the same as another nation lives its existence for money, art, or anything else. The individual's life goes on just the same, only the conditions are changed.

And everybody is equal over there in the Allied armies. The English gentleman is fighting beside the French negro, or Turko, as he is called, and when wounded, lies in the next bed to him.

It's a wonderfully democratic arrangement.

One of those negroes amused me greatly. He was a big husky fellow with kinky hair and thick lips, a typical negro, only he spoke French instead of English. This French negro had had his nose shot entirely off. I had previously helped carry him into the hospital and he was indeed a dreadful sight to behold. A piece of shrapnel had got him and he came very nearly "going West."

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But the doctors took him and labored with him day after day, and week after week. They took a piece of bone out of his side and some skin from another place and by working, and grafting, and rubbing, they finally brought out a new nose on the fellow, and he used to boast in front of his black pals that when they got back to Africa he would have the edge on all of them with those swarthy girls because his comrade's noses were big and flat and he now had a better looking one in place of his old flat one.

Many a little incident of a similar nature happens, both in the hospitals and on the field, and the men even though badly "cut up" are not all the time groaning; and the nurses even though very sweet and gentle are not constantly weeping. They'd soon be shipped back home if they were. They go about their work and do it, just as a doctor does at home.

A good many cases of mutilation were found which were just as bad as that of the negro, and which in the beginning seemed just as hopeless. We carried in one British Tommy who had his entire lower jaw blown off. He presented a fearful spectacle. He was put to bed and very carefully prepared and treated to get his body into proper shape for the operation. This required some days. Then those confident surgeons started in on him. Day by day they built a jaw for him, taking a piece from here and another from there and by skillfully massaging and rubbing they by and by, got him fixed up, and then the most skilled dentists in the world took him in hand and put in teeth for him so that today you cannot discern that he was ever badly mutilated. All you can see is a little mark from the left corner of his mouth and a very small scar from the right corner. He lisps just a little also, as his tongue was partly shot away.

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In cases where the limbs are fractured, or where certain positions must be maintained while the patient is lying in bed, a clever device has been arranged.

A frame which holds up the several parts of the body is attached to the bed, or is a part of the bed, and in this frame are many pulleys with ropes and weights attached. When the wounded soldier who is all "broken up" is laid in this bed, his arm is laid in a form, and the form is lifted to the proper position and held there by the weight over the pulley. Some positions are necessary for rapid healing; some are necessary for comfort or for avoiding intense pain. By this arrangement, invented by Dr. Alexis Carrel, any portion of the body can be lifted to any height or angle and kept there as long as necessary. It is a very ingenious apparatus, at the same time simple and of inestimable value.

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CHAPTER XXIII GETTING BY THE CONSULS

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From the very beginning I had had an overwhelming desire to go to Belgium. Somehow that country has gripped the imagination of the world and mine as well. Neither did I think of any of the drawbacks, but simply said, "I'm going to Belgium for relief work." I had not been successful in being assigned to any unit before I left the States, so I started for France en route for Belgium on my own initiative. Mr. Bryan gave me a passport, but when I arrived in France Ambassador Sharp urged me to remain and serve there, as he thought it would be extremely difficult to get into Belgium when men were needed in France, and while I did as he advised, I never gave up the idea of going to Belgium. I had seen enough of German *Kultur* to whet my appetite and change my peaceful views, but now I wanted to get the evidence from the Huns themselves in the country which they were governing. Consequently it was this, which at the time impelled me to ask for a leave of absence and to apply for a pass out of France. I wanted to go to Belgium, but now for a different purpose than formerly.

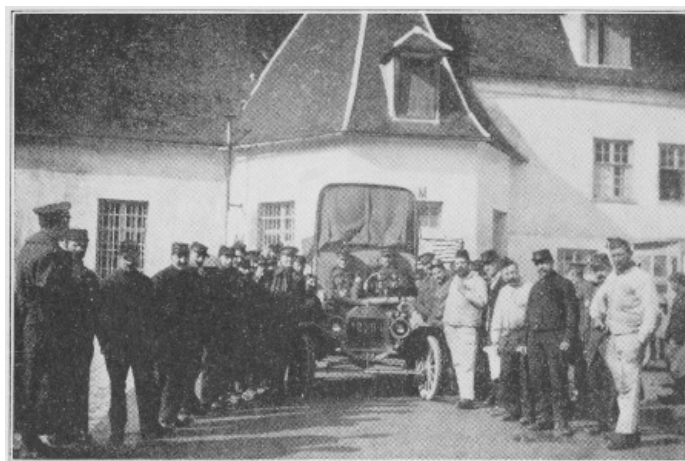
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I got a ten days' leave, but the only possible way of going was by way of England, thence to Holland, and from there over the Belgium border. I had my troubles. Of course I kept pretty mum as to where I intended to go. I went to the American Consul and got my passport *visé*, that is, stamped or O. K.'d. I then had to go to the French Consul and ask him to *visé* my passport. Inasmuch as I was going to England, which was an allied country, it was not very difficult to persuade the French Consul to let me go. I then had to go to the English Consul and get his consent to enter England. He did not seem very formidable and I finally got past him also. My reason for going to England I told him, was "en route to Holland." You have to have a reason for doing everything. But since England was not my destination, but only "en route," my reason did not need to be very definite and was accepted.

When I got to Dieppe, a British soldier or young officer I believe he was, who had had several "Bass' Ales," took me under his wing and undertook to see me through. He told the customs man that I was one of their boys from the front and all right, as I was going home to Blighty. Consequently I had little difficulty there. I was still wearing my ambulance uniform, which much resembled theirs, although I had a civilian suit in my grip. I wore the uniform so as to get the benefit of the special rate on the railroad, namely, one-fourth fare. As I sat down to have a chat with this Englishman he was so good to me that I got quite confidential. We had been talking about the brutalities of the Germans in Belgium. I said, "I'm on my way to Belgium now, I'm going around behind the German lines to see the Huns as they are." "You don't say so!" said he. "Yes," I said, "I'm going over to Belgium to see with my own eyes the picture of devastation." He didn't take it well. He got a little excited and said, "Well you better not, in fact I'll see to it that you don't go over to the German lines. I'll have you know that we're not funnin' in this business." I saw that I had got in bad. I always did have trouble in that way. I couldn't keep my mouth shut and whenever I opened it I put my foot in it. I began to back up. I don't remember just what I said, but I suddenly became very conciliatory and gave him to understand that I'd far rather take his judgment on the matter, and if he thought I had better not go, why, of course, I wouldn't do it. I think he almost forgot it after a bit, but to make sure I opened up my grip and took out half a pound of smoking tobacco which I had drawn gratis at the Ambulance, contributed by his own countrymen, the Overseas Club, and with all the ceremonies, presented it to him.

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A HURRY CALL. "CLEAR THE TRACK."



"JUMBO," THE BIGGEST AMBULANCE ON THE WESTERN FRONT.

The author is the second man on the left.

That tobacco (added to the ale) caused him to completely forget my purpose, and as the boat whistled off from the dock, he waved me a merry "Best 'o Luck."

But I thought many a time how close I came to being balked, by my tongue. A word from him to headquarters would have cooked the whole game.

On the water the night was very stormy. I guess all nights are on the English channel, but this one was particularly so. It rained all the way. It was a four-hour trip, and while I am an excellent sailor and had never been sick in crossing the ocean, I was fearfully sick that night. The next day I was in London.

What was the procedure? I was told by somebody, that wherever I was going I would surely be held three days in England. I went to the American Consul. I wanted my passport visé for Holland. My reasons? Well, I couldn't say "en route" anymore because they don't approve of people going through Holland to the enemy. Going to Holland, what for? Why, naturally, to see my old friend and professor, Doctor Henry Van Dyke, American Minister there. Of course the doctor didn't know I was coming, and wouldn't have remembered me anyway. But nevertheless I had conceived a sudden and irresistible desire to visit him.

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A young fellow by the name of Ripley Wilson, about my own age, was vice-consul. He waited on me, but he did not seem satisfied with my explanations, or my reasons for wanting to go to Holland. He talked and argued and hemmed and hawed, and finally said, "What is your real object in going to Holland, Mr. Benson?" I answered, "I have told you that I am going over to visit my old professor, Doctor Van Dyke." Then he tried to trap me. He said, "Oh, did you go to Harvard?" I said, "No, sir." He said, "Then where did you know him?" I said, "Dr. Van Dyke never taught in Harvard. I knew him at Princeton, naturally, the place where he taught." This kind of floored him, but still he persisted. "But, Mr. Benson, what would anybody say about such a reason as you give, 'going to Holland to visit a friend in war time?'"

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I saw the situation. Ripley Wilson just needed a little domineering, and for the first time in my life I was a little saucy to a diplomatic officer. I said, "Mr. Wilson, I have told you what I am going to Holland for, and furthermore what would anybody say about you asking me so many petty questions? Wouldn't they say it was none of your business?" It worked.

In a few minutes I had his signature and stamp on my passport, and we bade each other a good-natured good-bye. Then I had to go to the British foreign office to get their permission to leave, and that was not so easy. The young fellow who first handled the case asked me a lot of similar questions and I answered them in the same way. Then he asked me if I was going to try to go to Belgium when I got to Holland. "Why, I hadn't thought of it," I replied. All the time with a straight face. After a while he went into another room and presently returned and asked me to come back at four o'clock, as I had better have a personal talk with the colonel.

I went up to Trafalgar Square and saw the military demonstrations and then went up the Strand and looked about a bit, and at four o'clock went back to Whitehall. I was ushered into the presence of the colonel. He was in all his glory. Trappings of every kind adorned his person, shoulder straps and all. But surprising as it was to me, he was not at all officious and I had a very pleasant hour with him. At first he was a little curious. He wanted to know my reasons for going to Holland and so forth, but after a little he became very cordial and said, they simply wanted to be careful, as people going to Holland were getting very near the enemy and might tell something even unwittingly which would hurt the cause. He then said he would get me a special permit to go that night on a certain boat on the Zelande Line at eight o'clock. He called Mr. Haldane-Porter on the telephone and told him he was sending me over, and also gave me a letter to him requesting him to give me his special pass. I later figured out that it wasn't any special honor at all that he was favoring me with, but that his words and actions meant I was to go at the hour he said and on the boat he indicated and have every movement I made thoroughly known to Scotland Yard.

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Nevertheless I felt fortunate and glad. Then I had to go to the Dutch Consul in London and get his permit to enter his country. He was neutral and didn't give a rap where I went, so I didn't have to spend much time on him, but only ninety cents. My khaki uniform I checked at the North London Railway. I didn't care to have any khaki about me when I went to Germany. They don't like it over there. I stuck the check in a safe hiding place in the back of a book of cigarette papers which a poilu had given me as a souvenir. Then I caught my boat and sailed for Holland. On the boat I noticed a sign saying that no letters were to be carried across, on pain of summary justice. It scared me, as I had several letters that I did not want to part with. Two were addressed to Brand Whitlock, the American Minister in Brussels, and one to a woman who is the mother of one of my ecclesiastical flock in America. Nevertheless, I kept them.

When I got to Holland I went straight to The Hague. The first thing I did was to have two photographs taken, one with my arm band on my sleeve, and the other without it. Doctor Van Dyke I found in his office, and his son also, who remembered me in college. However, the doctor said that he had serious doubts whether I could get into Belgium. He recently had received word from Mr. Whitlock to be very careful about letting people come over from Holland, as there was not much for them to do and they often made a lot of trouble.

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The Doctor suggested that I write Mr. Whitlock and ask him if he had something for me to do in the relief work. Well, as a matter of fact, I did not want to do this. There were two reasons. One was that I knew it would take a week to get a reply, and I did not want to wait. The other was I was afraid he might say no, thus effectually blocking my plans and hopes. I wanted to get to Belgium above all things. At last, Dr. Van Dyke said he did not feel he should be the one to *visé* my passport, but I had better go down and have a talk with Colonel Listoe at Rotterdam. He was the real official who should do it, being the closest to the border, but the Doctor was doubtful if he would do it. I gathered from the conversation that he and the Colonel were very intimate friends. I then went to a hotel, *l'Américain*, on the Wagonstraat and went to bed to sleep over it. The next morning a happy thought struck me. I said to myself, "I'll try some diplomacy on these diplomats." Again I went over to Dr. Van Dyke's office, and said, "Doctor, I haven't much identification, and I wonder if you would be willing to give me a note saying that I am the person I purport to be, and an American citizen. He said, "Why certainly," and wrote me such a note on the official stationery. I put the note into my pocket, gleefully. I forgot to tell him that I had come all the way from France and England to have a visit with him, but nevertheless I had had it. I now thanked him and bade him good-bye. I hastened by electric to Rotterdam, and hunted up the American Consulate. I knocked on the door and asked, "Is Colonel Listoe in?" "Yes, the name, please?" "Mr. Benson." A man rose and stepped cordially forward to greet me. I said, "Colonel Listoe, I believe, I just came down from my old friend, Doctor Van Dyke; I was under him at college, and his son was in my class. I have a letter from him here and I am going over to Belgium."

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"Oh, oh, Dr. Van Dyke; well, well, to be sure!" He took my passport and had the vice-consul *visé* it before ever he looked at the note. Then while I was getting out the letter I explained that it was just a formal note of identification; but my passport was already fixed and everything was fine.

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I chatted with him for an hour, smoked one of his fine black cigars and, of course, found him a delightful man. Then I said, "Colonel, is there anything else I need to do before I can go to Belgium?" "Oh, by George!" he said, slapping himself upon the knee, "I almost forgot the most important part. Sure, you must go over to the German Consuls and get their consent, and go before four o'clock." Ah! there was the rub. I knew it. But I went. And I had some whale of a time getting their consent, too. When I went into the room there were six of them sitting behind the table. I went up to the first one and told him I wanted to go to Belgium. I was now in my civilian clothes and I had put the set of photographs with the Red Cross arm band on, in my left pocket and the set without the arm band in my right pocket. The man asked me, "What do you want to go to Belgium for?" I replied: "Relief work." "What kind?" "Red Cross." "Are you a Red Cross man?" "Yes, sir." "Have you a commission?" "N-n-no." "How do you prove you are a Red Cross man?" I began fumbling for my photographs. For the life of me I couldn't tell which kind were in which pocket. I reached and shuffled, and turned red, and pulled out—the wrong one! Well, it didn't make much difference. I said, "That's just a civilian picture for putting on my passports, but here is my Red Cross picture." Then I pulled the other on him. He seemed satisfied. That Red Cross on the sleeve seemed to do the business. He said "You will offer yourself to the Red Cross in Belgium?" I said, "Yes, sir." When he was about finished, another consul passing by became curious. He said, "What is it this man wants?" And about the time I had satisfied him, still another came. And if you don't think it is some job to convince six Germans to be of the same mind at the same moment, try it sometime. The man finally said, "I shall write it on your passport that you will offer yourself to the Red Cross in Belgium?" I knew that he meant business, and if it was written on there it meant for me to do it, but I was ready to do anything. I wanted to get into Belgium. I had been five days making the trip up to the doors of Belgium, a trip that would take ten hours ordinarily, and I did not want to be balked. I said, "Yes, sir, you may write it on my passport." He did it, too. He then said, "Eight marks!" and I fished out two dollars. That passport is one of my valued souvenirs today. I was now getting poor, as every consul had been bleeding me both to leave and to enter his country. The Americans were the only ones whose stamp was free. My pass was given me to Brussels and the next morning I embarked. When we crossed the border a mile or two in, the train stopped at Esschen. Most of the cars were locked and the passengers, a few at a time, were taken out and searched. I was among them, and it was not a pleasant sensation. But I was in Belgium, had come from the enemy and had literally bluffed my way through.

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CHAPTER XXIV

A CLOSE SHAVE

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On my way to Brussels I had to pass through Antwerp. My pass allowed me to go to Brussels—and nowhere else. But as the train stopped at six o'clock in the evening at Antwerp, and I learned that it would be there about three hours, I got off and asked the Germans who guarded the gate if I might stay in Antwerp over night. They told me that I had plenty of time and I might go down to the Kommandantur of the city and make my request. I did so.

"Herr Kommandantur" was a big, bull-necked, red-faced fellow who responded to my request with the grunted word, *Warum?* When I explained why I wanted to stay he asked me several questions about myself and wrote down the charges against me, and finally said if I would give him a quarter I could stay overnight—no, that was not exactly the way he said it, either. He did not speak English anyway, but after writing down all these answers, he said in a harsh, guttural tone, *Eine Mark!* I took the hint, and it didn't take long for me to produce the quarter. He then handed me the paper, which said that I was permitted to leave Antwerp and go to Brussels the following day. That was all I wanted. I wanted to see Antwerp—but I also wanted to go on, when I got ready. I had to have that paper then, permitting me to go on the morrow, or else I'd "find out the meaning of German authority!"

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The next morning I took a walk to have a look about. I had already, on the previous day, as I came into Antwerp, witnessed many towns lying in ruins, the remains of which I could see from the car window. But when I went out into the town of Antwerp, I learned just what the German could do in the way of vandalism and ruthlessness. I saw the forts which they had bombarded for three days, on the third day of which they had tossed over those forty-two centimeter shells at the rate of one every five seconds all day and all night. The destruction was terrific. I came back to the center of the city and went into a little café to get some lunch. The woman who kept the place showed me two big pieces of iron and steel, chunks which must have weighed ten to fifteen pounds apiece, which she had found in her bed after the bombardment ceased, and she told me with tears in her eyes that later, after the capture of the town, the German officers outraged her daughter.

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Fortunately, the woman had not been sleeping at home at the time, but had been over with her sister, otherwise she would not have shown anybody those iron relics. It was a close shave. This woman was very kind to me, and the only reason I do not mention her name, and many other names of Belgian people, who were courteous and helpful to me, is that some pro-German would very likely report them and have them harassed by the military governors there.

These governors are most thorough in their policy of persecution and inquisition, the same as in their scientific research, and I often hold myself back from telling names of Belgian people who were hospitable to me, for their own safety. When the war is over I shall write them all and try to demonstrate my deep appreciation. They bore up so nobly when their kinfolk were killed, their homes destroyed, and their country devastated. As soon as I got to Brussels I called on the American minister.

CHAPTER XXV

MEETING BRAND WHITLOCK

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A diplomatic officer is a peculiar individual. I wish I were one—sometimes. I wouldn't have liked to be Brand Whitlock, however, when this war broke out. He had been living a quiet, peaceful existence in that wonderful city of Brussels, no doubt having a good time in general, when suddenly and without warning the country was invaded by hordes of hostile Germans, who bombarded the cities, burned the hamlets, and slaughtered the people in large numbers, driving others by thousands from their homes and out of their country. Then the conqueror began oppressing the captive people, and Brand Whitlock had to act as intermediary. Besides this, he had to defend himself from those other hordes from the outside; I mean the Americans who bombarded him with offers to come over and help care for the poor, starving Belgians. I was one of them. Their motives were excellent, but their judgment was questionable, and it never seemed to enter their heads that if thousands of them went over to care for the starving Belgians, it would take a large amount of food to keep them, before ever the Belgians got any. Furthermore, the Germans did not like Americans in the country, seeing what they had done to Belgium. It wasn't pleasant to have them around. They arrested them and harassed them and caused a lot of trouble. No wonder Mr. Whitlock wrote to Dr. Van Dyke asking him to be very careful about sending Americans over. But I am a persistent person.

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When I got to Brussels I went to call on this same minister. I did possess two personal letters addressed to him from American Congressmen who were good friends of Mr. Whitlock. And I felt it would be a shame not to deliver them.

But the young lady who received the visitors asked me what I wanted to see him about. I replied, "On business." She said, "He is very busy." I asked, "Is he too busy to attend to business?" "Well,"

she answered, "I don't believe he could see you."

I responded, "Say, my young lady, I am an American citizen, a stranger in a strange land. I am among a people who are not particularly friendly, as I have already learned. They are the bosses over here. I am expecting to be about in this country somewhat, and I feel I have a right to be known by the American Minister. If anything happens to me, I want him to be able to identify me. Our diplomatic officers are sent here by the United States, paid by the people, to look after our interests, and our traveling citizens, and then when we come here the secretary says he cannot see us. Why is it?"

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This evidently made some impression, for she said finally, "Well, if you will come back in the afternoon, I suppose you can see him."

I went away then, saying, "I certainly expect to see him." In the afternoon I did. I found Mr. Whitlock the most genial man in the world. He had plenty of time to be civil and obliging and to chat a while, although I did not abuse the privilege. I told him I wanted him to know me, and I delivered the letters. As I left he stamped my passport and said, "Come in again when you can, Mr. Benson." I had occasion to do so—before long.

CHAPTER XXVI MY MAPS OF BELGIUM

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On leaving Mr. Whitlock I went down town and engaged a room at a little private hotel for the duration of my stay in Brussels. One day shortly afterwards, while I was sitting in a café of the little hotel, a neighbor of the proprietor came in and I was introduced to him. He was a very likable fellow, and we had a half hour's pleasant chat, at least it was pleasant for me. I am not so sure it was as pleasant for him, for I was certainly an artist at butchering up the King's French.

As he arose to go out he bid me *au revoir* and stopped for a moment to speak confidentially to the madame who ran the place. After he had departed she told me that the man was a regular customer of theirs who lived down the street, and that he was a printer by trade. His particular line of printing was that of map making, and he had told the landlady that he would like to make me a present of some nice maps of Belgium if I would accept them. He wanted to show his appreciation for the assistance of America. I said, "That would be very fine and I would certainly be glad to have them, both for their instructive value as well as a memento of the giver."

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Accordingly, the next day the man came over with his maps in his hand and gave them to me. They were not large and could be conveniently folded and put into the pocket, but they were unusually complete and really very excellent guides to the country. I took them and thanked him, looking them over admiringly and putting them into my inside pocket.

Thereafter when I talked with the Belgian people about the geography of the country, I frequently consulted my map in order to fasten in mind the location of the different towns. My own study of geography in my earlier days had been sadly neglected or forgotten, so I found these very useful gifts. It was quite natural that people, in talking with me about the brutality of the Germans, should mention towns where the most glaring atrocities had been perpetrated. I had also read the Bryce report and the names of certain towns stood out distinctly in my memory. These places I marked with a cross on the map, so as to be sure to visit them, and later, when I visited other destroyed villages or cities, I marked them also, so that later in life I might glance over the maps and easily recall the experiences in each of the places. I thought I had a very nice memento which would always call up vivid recollections. Certain places had been already specially marked in the making of the map by having circles of stars around the town which I did not exactly understand, but supposing they were important cities or capitals of provinces, I was particular to put a cross there as a place which I ought to visit, which I did in most cases. In, fact, before I had completed my tour of the country I had the maps pretty well crossed up, especially in the more important centers throughout the ruined districts.

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One striking thing in scanning the maps was that I had not marked a single place which was not in the devastated area, plainly indicating that I had made a careful point of traveling only through the parts which the Germans had destroyed and going only to the worst desolated places at that. In other words, by a glance at my map you could follow my itinerary practically as easily as you can follow a rabbit in the snow by his tracks.

Many a time I contemplated looking back with pleasure and explaining to my American friends in years to come and to my grandchildren, when my hair should be gray, how I had bluffed my way through the German lines and observed the country and the German rule while he was still in possession. It would be a thing of which few men could boast, since it was against the military policy of every country to allow anybody to come from the enemy and go through their land and then go back to the enemy again. That was unheard of. Yet inwardly it was my intention, and, in fact, I had no other idea than that I should accomplish it successfully. Consequently I wrote down nothing. I mean I kept no diary on paper and I wrote no letters. I had many friends in France who would have liked to have a word from me, and also my folks in America expected me to write them letters for news and for souvenirs, but I was afraid to attempt to send any word to them, even indirectly through Holland, as I feared the Germans would open all mail, and finding me in

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touch with France, would decide that I intended returning there and then would see to it that I did not. Everything that I saw and heard in Belgium, all the information I received, was in my head and not on paper, as I felt that would save me much trouble; so I merely marked the maps with little crosses.

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CHAPTER XXVII THE "CAT AND MOUSE" GAME

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At length I went to the German Pass office in Brussels. It was called the "*Pass-Zentrale*," up in the Rue Royale, only a block from the King's palace. I there applied for a pass to Liège. I was told by the sentry to come back in the afternoon, at three o'clock. The office is only open from nine till twelve and from three to six. I went back at three. A young "smart aleck" of the name of Klenkum took my American passport from me and told me to come back the next morning between ten and eleven, giving me, as he spoke, a slip of paper which read, *Zwischen zehn und elf*. I went back next day and handed Klenkum the slip of paper, which he saucily laid on the other side of the desk and wrote another, telling me to come back in two days, or Sunday between ten and eleven. I was angry. He saw it, and said, "Prisoner, eh?" I did not answer. And so as I opened the door he rubbed it in, saying, *Sehr gut, eh?* With a sickly smile on my face, I replied, "Yes, very good," and went out. But I was simply boiling. I went to the office of Von Bissing and had quite a talk with him, but nothing came of it. I then went up to Mr. Whitlock and told him what they were doing with me. I said the Germans were keeping my American passport, which was a breach of international law, and playing a kind of "cat and mouse" game with me. Immediately he wrote a letter curtly demanding my passport and ordering them to give me a pass where I wanted to go. I took this letter up and delivered it at headquarters. Well, they ignored the letter entirely, and the pass was given me at the last moment Klenkum had indicated, namely, eleven o'clock on Sunday. But Klenkum was not the particular man who handed it to me. He sent me into another room to a higher officer. My pass was handed me by an important personage.

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I was then given some instructions by no less a person than Von Bissing himself. But I had kept the road hot in front of the King's palace, between Mr. Whitlock's office, corner Rue de Trèves and Rue Belliard, and the German *Pass-Zentrale* in the Rue Royale. This heckling, harassing policy of duplicity was the one which the German Government constantly employed, and when one reflects a moment and makes comparisons, he finds that it is the same policy which they have used in their diplomatic notes and business with the United States ever since the war began. It is almost impossible to pin them down to anything, and have any guarantee that they will keep their word.

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As Viellaur, the officer in charge, finally handed me the passports, I jokingly said to him, "There's a good deal of red tape about getting a pass from the German Government, isn't there?"

"Well," he said, "of course we think you people are friendly to us, otherwise you wouldn't be able to get a pass at all. We conclude," he continued, "that you are friends, from what we see in the newspapers." I replied, "Well, that's about all a person has to go by, just what he sees in the newspapers." I left him to draw his own conclusions, while I caught the train.

CHAPTER XXVIII SHADOWED AT LIÈGE

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At Liège I felt the German espionage system. This city became world famous in a week's time when the Hun was pounding at the gates. It was the first the world knew of the war. The place was fearfully "strafed." It was Sunday afternoon when I arrived. Before I could get off the train, or rather out of the depot, I had to let the German soldiers search me, and they went through my clothes with a marvelous thoroughness. When I went to a hotel and was eating my supper I found there two Germans in the dining room, one of whom was a soldier and one a railroad conductor, talking together. I will not mention the name of the conductor because if this was reported of him it might mean his execution. After a few minutes the soldier went away.

I went on with my supper but before I had finished a violent pounding sounded on the door. The proprietor, a Belgian, started to answer it, while his wife peeped out and saw that two burly German officers were there. She became excited and rushed back, seized my grip, turned out the light in the dining room, and bundled me off upstairs with my heart pounding like a steam engine.

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I did not know what was up.

Now, either the German Secret Service had shadowed me all the way from Brussels, or perhaps every step of the way since I entered the country, or else that soldier had gone out and reported me. Those officers demanded of the proprietor if there was an American in his house and if so what he was doing there. I don't know what answer he gave them, but after a while they went away.

I then had the most enlightening and frank talk with that civilian German conductor that I have ever had with a German since this war began. The Belgian hotel proprietor had known him for several months as a guest, and told me that I could trust the man.

In the conversation the German said, "War is a terrible thing. It is no good for common men like me."

"Why not?" I asked him.

"Why," said he, "I have a wife and two children at home, and if I go out and get killed what becomes of them?"

I said, "Won't the Kaiser take care of them?"

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"Humph," he grunted, *Der Kaiser!* And he put his fingers in his ears to indicate that the Kaiser would be deaf to their appeals. He continued, *Der Krieg ist gut für die oberen Zehn-Tausend, ja, ja! aber es ist nicht gut für diejenigen welche kämpfen.* "War is good for the upper ten thousand, yes, yes! but it is no good for the ones who do the fighting." I said, "You wouldn't dare to say these things when that soldier was here, or in front of military men, would you?"

Nein, natürlich nicht. Aber sie sind ein guter Kamerad. "No, naturally not. But you are a good comrade."

This little talk in which he said that kings and kaisers all ought to be dethroned, gave me an idea that there must be multitudes of men who feel the same, but because their souls are not their own, dare not give voice to it. I told the man that Americans could not understand how the Germans could enter the country and do the frightful things that they have done to the unoffending Belgians. I said we had thousands of kind and peaceable Germans in America, and many of them were among our best citizens. "Ah," said he, "it is the discipline. These German soldiers were once peaceable and kind citizens also, having families like myself, but the discipline of the army has made them warlike and unmerciful. After one year in the Kaiser's army they still have some heart left, after two years less, after three or four years of that discipline they have no heart at all."

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Another German, a soldier, then came in and my German friend shut up like a clam. So did I.

I went out next morning and saw the ashes and ruins into which the Germans had plunged the city and I had a talk with one Belgian man who had been made an atheist by the crushing experience. As I spoke with him, hearing his terrible tale, and seeing from his shop window dozens of homes which were burned down, and beautiful buildings deliberately desecrated, my faith in God did not diminish, but my confidence in my own former pacifism did, and I felt a growing faith in militancy when dealing with the German who respects nothing on earth but force. I was day by day realizing that he must be dealt with on his own grounds and with his own weapons. It was hard for me to come to this position but the cold and cruel facts were forcing it upon me.

CHAPTER XXIX

RESULTS OF "FRIGHTFULNESS"

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When Viellaur had given me my passport to Liège he had told me orally to come back by the same route I went. But it did not say so in the paper itself, and I ignored his instructions. I took an extended trip south in Belgium and I learned on this instructive but sad journey, just how the Germans hound the Belgian people and make life miserable for them. If the Belgians show any resentment whatever, they are arrested as seditious persons and usually deported to Germany to work in the fields or ammunition factories. I saw many instances where German officers or soldiers entered the homes of people and commanded the owners to stand back while they searched the place, and if mayhap, they found a letter from some friend in the house which had any complaints or any sentiment against the German invasion, the people were arrested and their existence made even more unhappy.

On this tour I also experienced something of the hard conditions from scarcity of food, and in the home of Madame Beauvoit, in southern Belgium, the mother of one of my parishioners in the States, I ate black bread the like of which I have never eaten before. I delivered a note to her from her daughter and stayed at her house overnight, but I could stay no longer as I was conscious that I was eating up her living. She told me at supper that they were only allowed ten ounces per day of that bread, bad as it was. I could hardly push the next swallow down my throat, for I was eating the life of that woman. I also observed the marvelous working of Mr. Hoover's food commission under the management of Mr. Whitlock and Hugh Gibson, and it was a wonderful organization and certainly an inspiring sight.

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But during those days I looked upon scenes and witnessed spectacles which break the heart, and I had opportunities of talking with Belgian people in their homes, where I stayed for meals, or in which I slept, and they told me heart-rending tales of the experiences they had gone through.

For hours sometimes I would talk with them, and the information which I thus obtained was most enlightening. They often handed me their cards also, sometimes requesting me to learn if

possible the whereabouts of their relatives, for thousands of them had fled, and been scattered afar. This journey gave me an insight into the motives of the German military men. One day I stopped at the little town of Dinant. There I saw a place of devastation so complete that even the ruins of volcano-destroyed Pompeii, could not compare with it. An aged man who was walking by, stopped and began to talk to me. I felt so sad on seeing the awful picture that I could hardly talk. In fact, as I stepped off the train I had burst into sobs. My ears, however, were alert and I greedily drank in his awful tale. The man pointed out a wall of solid rock which, was riddled with bullet holes. I stuck my finger into one of these holes and worked out a piece of stone, covered with blood from some poor man's heart. I still have it. He explained that more than one hundred innocent Belgians had been lined up against that wall and shot to death for no offense whatever. He also said that in some places where the Belgian people resented the invasion of their homes they were dragged out and lined up, and every third man was shot down to set an example to the people. The captain would count, "One—two—three!" and the firing squad would shoot a man. Then again "One—two—three, shoot!" "One—two—three, shoot!"

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Out on the public square of Dinant, more than four hundred of the civilians of the town were herded together, having been dragged from their homes or seized upon the streets. They were huddled in that square and ropes were stretched around the company. Then the German machine gun captain standing a score of yards away, on the word of command, opened up that death-dealing device which shoots more than eight hundred times a minute, and mowed down that crowd of people on the public square as though it had been cattle in a slaughter house. Nor did the German Government itself deny these things. In fact it admitted innocent slaughter, in some cases. But it sought to justify it as a means to its military goal. The German *White Book* itself speaks of the measures taken at Dinant. It says that the German soldiers were repairing a bridge which the Belgians had destroyed to prevent the Germans from coming into their town. But the enemy finally took the place and as they worked on the bridge (so the German version reads) some Belgians fired upon them from the roofs of the houses in the vicinity. Whereupon the soldiers caught all the Belgian people they could find upon the street, lined them up against the wall, and announced that if there was any further firing, these people would all be killed. The report says, "Still the firing continued, and then we shot the innocent people. We had to do it, otherwise our words would have been but an idle threat. We were compelled to do these things in order to accomplish our military goal, which must be achieved at all costs."

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And with this ideal in view, they raged through the land leaving it little more than a pile of blackened brick and ashes soaked in blood. I went to Louvain, to Mons, and Charleroi, to Namur and Haecht and Aerschot in like manner, and in these places also I saw and heard such heart-breaking things. These acts were the result of the policy of "frightfulness" which the Germans had been taught thoroughly. After sufficient experience with this sort of thing and being sickened with it all, I finally turned my face back toward the north.

CHAPTER XXX

MY MENTAL PROCESSES

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Of course I did not know what was ahead of me, but I knew from the experiences which were back of me how I felt toward the Germans. I had gotten so that every time a German soldier passed me on the street with his arrogant and hardened attitude, I muttered the words, "The scourge," under my breath. I had seen the invariable results of his *Kultur* and they had in every case been sordid and degrading. Henceforth I could not look upon him with anything else than contempt and hatred. The vandalism which I had seen and the terrible crimes that I had learned of, aroused in me something that I had not realized before. An anger such as seldom comes to men and such as I had not suspected my pacifist nature capable of, now seized hold of me. I vowed in my secret self that if I ever got out alive I would throw the weight of my small influence against that inhuman machine.

The Good Book speaks of a "righteous indignation," and if ever there was such a thing in the heart of a human I believe it had possession of me then. Nor was it a momentary impulse. I had grimly and deliberately gone from place to place, day after day, for the purpose of collecting unbiased facts and impressions and these latter had taken their own course in my heart and brain. Of course I wrote nothing down. I made no attempt to get a single letter out of Belgium during all the time that I was there. I was afraid that it would get me into trouble when I came to leave. I kept no diary whatever. I needed none. All the things which I have related have been from memory, but these facts were so vividly burned into my soul that they will never be forgotten unless my faculty of memory be permanently destroyed. I did not write down the impressions which came to me, or the process of conversion which was constantly taking place within my being. I dared not commit these things to paper. I realized that I was in the hands of a powerful and terrible people who would show no mercy upon one who was not in sympathy with its aims and methods. Nevertheless, I swore that if I ever got free from them I would tell the world the facts and do everything within my power to thwart them and their purposes.

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Before I had left the States I had not only been a pacifist, but I had been neutral as well. Any person in my former congregation could testify that I never spoke one word from the platform against the Germans, but now I have no hesitation in condemning them with vehemence and opposing them with violence. It might seem to some as though this was a strange attitude for a

minister of Christ to take, but I was led on as inevitably to this position as the compass needle seeks the pole. I had no choice. I could not help myself, but today I am proud to state that I accepted this conclusion and that deliberately and boldly I will defend it.

In a Utopian world one can act in a Utopian manner. And a Utopian world is a beautiful theory. But it is a theory and a dream. You and I today are living in a world of stern, cruel fact; in this world of fact we find the stern, cruel German. We find him here in possession of a land which he has stolen by stern, cruel, and murderous methods. He intends to keep that land, perpetuate those methods, and steal more land by identical methods. These are the methods he knows and employs. These are the only methods he respects or that make any impression on him whatever. Then we must use stern methods against him in order to overcome and thwart him and restore the world to normal methods and life. Otherwise he will encroach and impose his system upon the whole world and his method will be the permanent and the universal fate.

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THE BURNING OF A FRENCH FIELD HOSPITAL.

The hospital was hit by an incendiary shell. So sudden was the blaze that only a few of the Red Cross ambulances could be saved. The hospital and surrounding buildings were razed to the ground.

If we see a wolf we meet him with force. If we deal with a kind man we meet him with kindness. If we meet a reasonable and intelligent being we answer him with reason and intelligent argument, and if we find vicious, violent men, whether burglars, I. W. W.'s, or Germans, we meet them with police, with militia, and with force. In a world of fact this is the only way we have of meeting such. We cannot confront a real and stern and urgent situation with a hazy theory, beautiful as it may be. In the meantime, if we do, we will have no country. We will have a Germanized world, and from our recent experience of Germanism we are convinced that this would be defiantly opposed to the will of God.

Being an American citizen it was natural that the ideals of our constitution should be rooted in my nature, and now I could not but bring them into contrast with the ideals of Germanism as demonstrated in this war. I believed these American principles to be Christian principles and the very backbone of them to be at cross purposes with the German goal. Our forefathers ordained and established that constitution in order to establish justice which the German had tried to break down while he established injustice. Our forefathers desired to promote the general welfare and insure the blessings of liberty to themselves and to posterity, while the German machine had existed and had begun this war for the purpose of enslaving people and exploiting them, thus depriving them of liberty.

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Now one or the other of these viewpoints was right. If America was right, Germany was wrong. Every clod and stone of Belgium declared the guilt of Germany. And I now declare that Germany is wrong! And therefore when she menaces the world in a military sense she must be put down by military means. When one reasons the matter out from the facts he cannot get away from this logic. Germany must be put down by military means!

Now, of course, I did not say this to the Germans who were constantly on guard in the towns and cities. I had no military forces at my command. They had the guns. Nevertheless, I was now morally on the side of the Allied nations who were fighting to defend justice, right, and truth. I firmly believe that this eye-opening experience in Belgium under the very noses of the Germans and within their very power was the thing which brought me to a right perspective of life and to be able to clearly see things in their relative and proper values.

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My viewpoint changed, and I am sure that I can never be the same man again. Nobody can be the same who has been in this war.

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CHAPTER XXXI

A NIGHT IN LOUVAIN

In Paris I had met and talked with Arno Dosch Fleuro, an American reporter who had been with Richard Harding Davis at Louvain while it was burning. He had told me that when he was there the party was locked in a railroad car but that they could see the blazing buildings from the car window and hear and see the ungodly things which were taking place in the station square. The German soldiers were heavily intoxicated and were bringing lots of Belgians from all quarters of the city and executing them.

One group of soldiers would come in from the street, driving perhaps a dozen or twenty Belgians ahead of them. They would bring them into the station square, hand them over to another detachment which would take them out behind the station, and a volley of bullets would be heard. Then another crowd would be brought in. They too would be taken out behind the depot and then another volley of bullets.

One hilarious German jumped up onto a wagon and began haranguing and explaining why it was necessary for these people to be killed. [Pg 175]

"The whole Louvain affair, the wanton burning and the murder, was nothing more than a drunken orgy." This was Arno's statement. The officers acquiesced in the affair, but later on when learning of the effect on neutral countries, the Kaiser said, "My heart bleeds for Louvain." Arno also said that he was the only one of the party in the car who could speak German and he had kept one soldier who was not so drunk as the rest, engaged in conversation at the car window, and this had protected them from the more intoxicated ones.

I knew that Arno himself was a German and I asked him if he had seen Richard Harding Davis' book on the subject. He said, "No, Davis got back long before I did, but I have heard that he wrote a book about it. What did he say? Did he say he was out in the town of Louvain? If he did, he is faking it up, because we were all locked in the car."

I said I could not remember just what Davis had said. When I returned to my room in Paris, however, I looked up Davis' story again and found it had agreed exactly with Arno's account. He admitted that they had not been out of the train, so I knew the narrative was true. [Pg 176]

Later on when I went to Louvain myself, I found that instead of exaggerating the case these men had very much understated it. I am not going to overstate it, but I will not cover up the facts in my recital of the events. I was in Louvain twice, but the first time I only saw it hurriedly and superficially on my way to Liège. The second time I stayed a night and a day. Before the war began the city had a population of forty-five thousand. It had perhaps ten thousand then. It was not all destroyed and the statement that the Hôtel de Ville was burned is incorrect. That beautiful city hall was saved by the Germans for their own use. Outside of this one building, however, every public building in Louvain is in ruins today. For several square miles in the heart of the city there is not a structure left. The cathedral is burned, although the walls still stand. The university library is gone, and in fact, aside from a fringe of houses, mostly tenements, around the edge of the city the most of the edifices are razed to the ground. And a man with whom I talked told me that fifteen of his fellow-townsmen there were taken by the German soldiers and thrown alive into a vat of quicklime in a factory and were left to die in the agonies of hell. He pointed out the place and told the story, crying as he did so. I believed him. [Pg 177]

CHAPTER XXXII

RUIN AND DEATH

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In the course of my travels I happened to run across two Belgians, one of whom had a brother at Andenne. Upon learning that I was an American he became very friendly and confidential and requested that I call upon his brother, giving me a card to him and assuring me that I would find a cordial reception. He said Andenne presented one of the saddest spectacles of the entire district and his brother had passed through the whole ordeal. At the time he told me this I was on my way from Liège to Namur. It was necessary to take a horse conveyance a part of the distance, between Flémalle and Huy, and I had this conversation with him in the hack. I was very glad to act upon his suggestion and instead of going into Namur that evening I got off at Andenne. It was not difficult to find the man's brother and when I gave him the card and told him I was an American he certainly did treat me royally. That evening we talked far into the night. He showed me the destruction which the Germans had wrought in his own home and told me of the things they had stolen from him. Incidentally, the desk in his front room had been locked when the Germans broke into the house, but they had overturned it, smashed the drawers in from the bottom and thoroughly looted it. [Pg 179]

The next morning he took me for a walk through the town. As we went through the streets I noticed that every house in the place had been riddled with bullet holes. There were hundreds of holes right through the solid brick. The German machine gunners had simply gone through the place and raked every house so that if there was a single person in it, even asleep in his bed, those bullets would seek him out and send him to meet his God. Besides this, every house had the

front doors and windows smashed in and now temporary boardings were nailed up in the place of them. By and by in the progress of our walk we came to the edge of the town.

There, along the side of the road, he showed me two tremendous graves side by side. I am sure they were not less than fifteen by twenty-five feet in dimension and piled up a couple of feet high with quicklime.

"There are sixty of my fellow-townsmen buried in each one of those graves," said my escort. "Piled in there three deep. These men were shot down by the German soldiers when they entered the town for no other offense than that of being Belgian citizens." [Pg 180]

The thing seemed incredible. "Are you certain about this?" I asked him. "Were you personally acquainted with these innocent people who were murdered?"

"I have lived here all my life," he replied, "and I am thirty-five years old. This was a place of four thousand people before the war and naturally I must have known almost everybody in the town."

I then said to him, "Would you be willing to give me a list of the names of some of the people whom you know to have been innocently murdered?" He said he would be very glad to do so, and when we got back to his house he took a piece of paper and in a very few minutes' time wrote out a list of fifteen or twenty names, bracketing those which belonged to the same family. In some instances whole families of three to five people were annihilated by the Germans.

That little piece of paper later on came very nearly getting me executed. But it served to show the deliberate policy of terrorism and frightfulness which the Huns pursued. The man pointed out house after house, naming the owner and his occupation where these murders had been committed. [Pg 181]

Later on I went to Aerschot. I had read in the Bryce report of Aerschot. When I entered the town on the electric tram car I saw the old familiar sight. It was the spectacle of gable ends of houses and stores sticking up toward heaven, the roofs having fallen in, all burned out inside and gaping at me from the smoke-blackened window holes where formerly the faces of the little children smiled. The whole town was in ruins. I entered a little shack where a woman was keeping store. We had a short conversation about the tragic experiences there and finally when I started to leave she became excited and frantic. I saw anger and tears coming into her eyes and she shot forth her hand and almost screamed, "Yes, and my own husband was shot down by my side also, as we were hiding in the cellar! We saw the German soldiers coming and we rushed below for refuge. They broke into our house, stole what they wanted, and then hunted us out in the cellar and shot my husband by my side. They then seized my own father, sixty-eight years of age, handcuffed him and dragged him out to the public square where with numbers of others of our townsmen he was shot down in cold blood and left lying unburied on the open square for two nights and two days. They wouldn't even let me bury him." [Pg 182]

And so it was that this kind of experience was repeated over and over again as I journeyed through desolated Belgium. The Germans put a deliberate policy of murder and of vandalism into awful execution.

They laid low the country on every hand. The traveler sees a remarkable country and a wonderful civilization, but one which has been annihilated by the unappreciative Hun, a brother to the beast. I have seen marvelously beautiful cathedrals, adorned by the conceptions of the greatest masters, built in honor of the one great Master who said, "All ye are brethren," shot to pieces by cannon, riddled by machine guns, burned up by flaming projectiles, thrown with terribly deliberate and accurate aim; cathedrals where the Christ had once been worshiped, and where the holy instincts of gentleness and love were inculcated. Now the figures of the Christ have sword thrusts in their sides and the hands and feet and face are pierced with bullets from the machine guns. I have seen widows wearing crape, with babies in their arms who cried for food and have been told by them as their eyes flamed up, how their loved ones were shot down by their sides or taken out and bayoneted in their sight; loved ones who had no part in the battle. [Pg 183]

When the people learned that the German Army had entered the town they frequently took refuge in the cellar, but the relentless soldiers sought them out. They broke in the doors and windows of the houses, stole the goods which they could carry, shot the men and then set fire to the home, and in not a few cases they shot and bayoneted the women and the babies. Priests also were made a special object of attack and the repeated narratives of particular cruelty toward them could not but carry conviction. A priest of Louvain who had escaped to Holland, later told me of forty of his fellow-priests being trapped in their headquarters and every one shot down.

At the little town of B— the soldiers demanded the keys to the church from the Belgian priest, in order that they could go in and burn it. When the priest refused they dragged him out of the house, over to the steps of the church, where they cut off his ears and nose and left him there alone, where Death shortly found him. These facts are corroborated by witnesses, who take solemn oath to the truth of them; and to anyone who has been in Belgium during the present war, no tale of savagery would sound too wild for belief. The Huns have forgotten that they ever were human beings and have reverted to the wolf, and so they swarmed through Belgium and through northern France, this scourge of God, two million strong, blasting and withering everything they touched. [Pg 184]

As I traveled through the country I saw houses by the scores and hundreds upon which machine guns had been turned, while occupied by unarmed and innocent people, and the tragedy was

fearful. These things I have seen with my own eyes and heard with my own ears. The high power of these modern shooting devices is almost beyond conception. At L— I saw two rapid-fire guns as I got off the train at the station, little gray, innocent looking things, a sort of rifle barrel mounted on a tripod, with a shield for the operator to stand behind, yet those guns could shoot seven hundred times a minute and when equipped with an electric motor they shoot four times that number, and they shoot to kill. Often with a range of two to three miles, they will deal sure death at a distance of a mile and a half. They are constantly trained on the city. Then their big guns astound the reason!

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The Springfield rifle has a range of five miles and the bullet on leaving the gun goes at a velocity of half a mile a second, or enough momentum to drive it through four and one-half feet of white pine. The siege guns which the Germans dragged up before the forts of Liége could drive a tremendous hole a foot and a half in diameter through twelve feet of solid concrete or four feet of solid steel.

Yet, notwithstanding this, having all the hellish machinery of war that the mind is capable of devising, they want still more and are ready to pay handsome sums to clever inventors who will turn out new and unheard of instruments of torture and death. They build boats which submerge themselves beneath the ocean, and from this position of vantage hurl deadly missiles and send to the bottom giant ships carrying thousands of innocent human lives; they experiment until they find deadly gases which can be projected at the enemy, causing indescribable agony as they are breathed into the lungs, while the unhappy victim writhes in pain and shortly dies; that they may be more terrible than Attila, the Hun, in their policy of frightfulness, in order to subjugate the world, yet they have failed, in that they have neglected to take into view the eternal laws of God. They have forgotten that the race is not always to the swift nor the battle to the strong. Eternal laws cannot be frustrated, and Germany has failed! Again I say, Germany has failed! History teaches him who is able to learn, that the Creator never meant one régime to rule the world. The Hun has failed. The Kaiser does not govern the Almighty nor run this universe. Man is dust and God alone is great.

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CHAPTER XXXIII IN THE PALACE OF THE KING

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While I was in Brussels I stayed all the time at the same hotel, that of Madame Baily-Moremans, No. 26, Rue de Vieux Marché au Grains, down near the Bourse. Her maiden name had been Moremans but over there when a woman is married her name often comes last instead of the man's. Here it would be Madame Moremans-Baily.

White sitting in the café one day, she introduced me to a wounded French soldier from Paris who was a prisoner of war. He had had one leg shot off but was about on his wooden leg and was staying at King Albert's palace, which had been converted into a Red Cross hospital. He was allowed by the Germans one free afternoon a week, to go down town for two hours, and I met him on one of these occasions. He told me many strange tales of frightfulness and gave me his card, asking me to come and visit him at the palace. You cannot go there except you have the name of someone whom you wish to see, and then you may visit only on Sunday afternoon between two and three o'clock. German sentinels are constantly on guard outside of the palace. When I went to see him he presented me with a photograph of himself, and having told him confidentially that I was going back to France, he gave me his mother's address in Paris. I afterward found her and told her about her son.

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While I was talking with him I noticed that he was continually rubbing his arm, and I finally asked him what was the matter. He then told me of his own almost incredible experience. He said he was lying on the ground at the battle of the Marne, with his leg blown off by shrapnel; while helpless there in this condition a German sergeant came up and attempted to go through his pockets and rob him of some money which he had upon his person. He objected, naturally, and I suppose protested violently, as any human would. Whereupon the German drew his saber and gashed him across his right arm and then drew his pistol and shot him through his left shoulder.

As the man finished telling me he looked about to see if any women were near, and not seeing any, pulled off his coat, rolled his sleeve way up, and showed me one of the most ugly gashes that I have ever seen. His arm was half cut off, and I shall never forget to my dying day the look of revenge that was on his face. Nevertheless Jean was a good fellow and talked and laughed in spite of his mutilated condition.

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The daughter of the landlady of the hotel had accompanied me to the palace, and as we were leaving the place we were both looking with bulging eyes about those great salons and taking in the marvelous chandeliers and gorgeous mosaics. Presently she said in a childish way, "I don't think—I—should like to be a queen—it's all too large and grand for me. I would rather live in my own humble little home, down town."

I have never forgotten that remark of the little Belgian girl. For as I reflected on it I thought of Belgium's queen, and where she now is—an outcast, an exile, having no country and no home, while the little girl did have one, such as it was. It was a home nevertheless.

The words of the poet came back to me,

*Princes and lords may flourish or may fade;
A breath can make them, as a breath has made:
But a bold peasantry, the country's pride,
When once destroyed, can never be supplied.*

CHAPTER XXXIV THE KAISER'S ENVY

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Two thousand years ago an invading monarch, Julius Caesar, in his *Commentaries* said that the Belgians were the best fighting men that he had met; and the reason was that they inhabited the best country he had visited.

Part of the ground is mountainous and in some places it rises sheer in the air for a thousand feet in solid rock and makes a formidable position for a stronghold or fortress.

In other places it rolls away from the eye for miles in beautiful valleys and fertile plains. The view reminds one of a great ocean on a calm and peaceful day. A fertile country, made doubly so by the ingenuity and industry of its inhabitants. The people of this remarkable land have constructed reservoirs and dug canals, erecting dykes and curious windmills, so that like Holland, her nearest neighbor, Belgium has irrigated her fields and made her water supply regular, and therefore her crops are certain.

The traveler as he passes through on foot or on the meandering tramways is pleasantly surprised to see the abundance of the verdure and heaviness of the grain in the fields and is often amused to see the little carts go by loaded high with produce, drawn to market by the stout family dog, or, as is more often the case, two. These faithful friends display amazing strength and willingness and when hitched up will pull almost like a horse. Dairying is an important product in Belgium, and great cans of milk are loaded on these carts and the thirsty one can buy a pint for a penny or two and drink it as he stands upon the street by the cart, while the family dog is lying down under it.

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The spectacle of the peasant folk thus hauling about their wares is very picturesque. A man or woman following a dog-cart and often times lending a hand to help push the load, is a very ordinary scene in the streets of that little country of one hundred miles square, but its prosperity and beauty present a peculiar fascination to anyone who has seen it. The German Emperor had seen it, and that was why he had attacked it.

Covetousness, that strange quality, appears to be a part of the make-up of the human mind. The devil apparently injected this fatal poison into the veins of man. Most people hold it partially under control, but some give free reign to it and allow it to become the ruling power in their lives. The Kaiser, reared in an artificial atmosphere, has not been able to resist this temptation, and so in his life it has been given unbounded sway; and, what is worse, through many patient years he has inoculated other men with the virus and under its influence built up a great machine for military conquest.

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He has always dreamed of world empire. He once said, "I have been raised upon the lives of Alexander, Theodoric, Caesar, Frederick the Great, and Napoleon. These men all dreamed of world empire. They failed. I have dreamed of world empire, and by the might of the mailed fist I shall not fail." He and the clique of men whom he has gathered about him possess a marvelous amount of persistence and thoroughness, feeling also a superiority over other peoples, and they have depended upon might to bring them victory.

Some delusion inherited from his ancestors and cultivated by his intimate friends caused the Kaiser, even when a very young man, to believe that he had a God-given right to possess anything that he could acquire, either by fair means or foul, and he has never taken any pains to control or diminish the conviction. As a matter of fact, on the contrary, he studiously cultivated and nursed it until it came to be the absorbing ambition of his life. When he came to the throne thirty years ago he announced himself as "Earth's supreme war lord." And because his empire continued to grow and develop rapidly, he seemed to take it that the forces of the universe were backing him up and that the Creator was with him and had given him special dispensation to manage the universe.

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In the beginning, doubtless, his conceptions had been more vague and abstract, but as time went on they became definite and concrete. He had seen the happy and prosperous lands of Belgium and France to the west, and he had wanted them. This settled the matter. It might shock the world and cost a terrific price, but that was incidental. Let others "pay the piper," he would reap the gain. His philosophy of "Might makes Right" cleverly disseminated through the empire, has caused many of his people to believe in it.

When one examines for a moment this conception which these German people have been taught, it makes their attitude more understandable, although no more excusable. For a generation or

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more they have been taught the "blood and iron philosophy." The crime is to be laid at the door of the leaders and the thinkers, and the great men of the nation. These have been false teachers, and "when the blind lead the blind, both fall into the ditch." They have inculcated a system of thinking, into the minds of large numbers of people, which leads them to believe that they are especially designed to dominate the world. Any means which they may employ to attain, establish, and maintain their supremacy are justifiable.

Even the professors in the schools and the theologians, as well, will unblushingly defend this position and justify German crime. As a result of this doctrine—see Belgium and northern France! Belgium, a murdered country, a ravished people, justice outraged, homes violated, churches desecrated, altars battered down, black hell turned loose, and all "justified" by the German contention. Ninety-three of the leading professors in the university, men to whom the world looked for light, but unfortunately men whose salaries might be cut off by the Kaiser at an hour's notice, defended this outrage, saying that Belgium was not wronged. It is safe to assume that the Kaiser requested the statement.

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Barbarian savages centuries ago defended the same identical argument that might is the right of the stronger. The nation's leaders, such as Bismarck and Bernhardt, Treitschke, Nietzsche, and the Kaiser himself have advocated this doctrine. Emperor William once told his troops to make themselves as terrible as Attila, the Hun. They have not forgotten this, for in Belgium they executed his command in a grimly literal sense.

CHAPTER XXXV

CAUGHT BY THE HUNS AND TRIED AS A SPY

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When I returned to Brussels I applied at the German office for a pass to Holland. I was told to come back "Next Tuesday," which was five days hence! Meanwhile the Germans kept my American passport. I was angry again. But I decided it was no use to worry Mr. Whitlock, as he could have no influence with these German officials anyway. His heart was willing but his power was weak with them. He had frankly said so. But I was not going to lose those intervening days, so I went without my passport to Mons again and also to Waterloo. At the latter place I climbed that immense artificial mountain two hundred and twenty-six steps up the side of it, cone-shaped as it is, and stood beneath that great British lion of bronze, a monument against the mania for world empire which Napoleon had a hundred years ago. There were three German soldiers up there so I did not tarry long. I was afraid they would ask me to show my papers. I was not supposed to move without them and was expected to stay in Brussels. However, I had not attempted to go on the trains, as German officers guard every depot and make anyone approaching the station show their papers. Lacking mine I would have been thrown into jail. So I had taken the tram, which is still run by the Belgian people, and fortunately I was not challenged. Soon after I left Waterloo I read that the Germans had torn down that great British lion, that historic monument a century old, and made it into bullets to shoot back at the British who put it there. It was a strange irony.

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Back in Brussels I again applied for my passports at the end of the five days. Instead of getting them I got arrested!

During the searching of my person which followed, and which was conducted with characteristic German thoroughness by Viellaur and his assistant, a bullet-headed fellow whose name I do not know, a peculiar incident occurred. I had a certain amount of material such as personal cards, souvenirs, etc., as any man is apt to have with him, although I had determined not to have anything about me which might in any way offend the Germans or give the slightest ground for suspicion that I was collecting information, possibly for the enemy. I did unconsciously accumulate a few innocent cards which people handed to me in this place and in that. I do not care who he is, any man who will turn his pockets inside out will find little things like that which perhaps he did not know he had or had forgotten all about.

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Also I had a book of cigarette papers which I had brought all the way from France. Being a preacher, of course I had no use for them! But an enthusiastic poilu had wanted me to have some souvenir to remember him by and not having anything else had presented me with this. Now the papers were not the kind which are stuck individually with mucilage by one edge into the cover and which I believe are called Riz-la-Croix, but the brand called Zig-Zag, which are creased in the middle and folded into each other, so that when you pull out one, it pulls the edge of the next one into view, and so on. Now, when it is open, if you press the two ends of the cover of this little book together a small aperture is disclosed in the back of the book, a kind of pocket, a thing which I suppose not one man out of a thousand who uses them constantly ever discovered. There is no reason why he should. But I had discovered this aperture and I suppose for convenience sake and possibly also for secrecy had stuck the check for my uniform in that aperture behind the cigarette papers when I received it at the Great Northern Railway station in London. The check was a good sized piece of paper on which the parcel man had written a description of my package, "1 Khaki Uniform," and which I had folded up and stuck in there and promptly forgotten. When Viellaur, taking me by surprise, suddenly began searching me, among other things he took this book of cigarette papers out of my pocket. He also found that list of murdered men from Andenne. From top to toe he had rifled me, and all my possessions were lying on his

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desk. Then, for some reason, he went around to the other side of the desk, and his assistant, with the bullet-head, began carefully examining all the articles. Certain things were plainly innocent and uninteresting. These he laid in one pile. For instance, there was a key, a plain picture post card, a paper napkin from Liège, etc. Certain other things looked interesting to him and he laid these on another pile. On the interesting pile he laid all cards which besides bearing the printed names of the original owners had other names and addresses written on them in handwriting, in ink, or pencil. On the uninteresting pile he put all the other things.

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Imagine my astonishment when Mr. Bullet-head began pulling out one cigarette paper after another from that book and finally squeezed the covers and saw the paper check for my uniform back in the little pocket-like aperture! He took it out deliberately, unfolded it and looked it over, and evidently not being able to make any sense out of it calmly laid it on the uninteresting pile! I heaved a sigh of relief for my heart had been in my mouth. If he had been anything but a German he would have immediately drawn the conclusion, fatal for me, that when I had a check for my uniform and baggage in London, I must have used them in the Allies' service, and I certainly intended to go back and get them. But going back to the enemy was just what they did not want. It was lucky that Viellaur, who knew English perfectly, did not see that check. You may be sure that the first chance I got I put the uninteresting pile back in my pocket so that he would not see it and it would not damn me. But the thrilling part was to come. Not feeling satisfied with the search, Mr. Bullet-head decided to go through me once again and made no bones or hesitation about promptly putting his decision into execution. Alas! He drew from the lining of my coat some maps of Belgium, where it looked as though I had deliberately put them in an attempt to hide them. "Cursed be the Fates anyway," I exclaimed to myself. My coat lining was torn just at the top of my inside pocket and when I had innocently put the maps in my pocket I had unwittingly put them inside the lining instead. It was fearfully damaging evidence! Though done unconsciously it did look mighty suspicious and when he began examining the map and saw the towns which I had marked and particularly the ones which I had considered important places, he concluded I was a spy.

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These towns, as a matter of fact, which had the circles of stars around them had been so marked by the manufacturer to indicate that they were fortified towns, but I did not know it. The evidence pointed to the conclusion that I had planned my visits to the fortifications to gather military information and with no good intent towards Germany. They were now sure I was a spy and, by George! before they were through with me I just about began to wonder if I wasn't one myself. I must confess at this distance of security and of time it did look most mightily suspicious. It certainly did, and I was in for the "third degree."

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After the German officers had searched me, and examined the papers, they threw me into a big gray military automobile, handcuffing me to the machine, and hurried me down to my hotel. They searched my room and grip, and then brought me back and threw me into a guard room. Five soldiers with saw-edged bayonets were set to watch me. I did whatever they told me without arguing. Upon being searched the several cards with names and addresses which Belgians from here and there had given me in the hope that I might find and cheer some dear one with news of their safety, were found upon my person. I was, therefore, charged with being a spy and with having gone to all these towns for the purpose of getting military information for the enemy. The fact that they themselves had given me the pass made no difference. Having so many spies in every country themselves made the Germans suspicious of everyone else. I was left in that guard room and told that I would have to stay until after lunch. The man must have eaten a heavy meal instead of a lunch, for he did not come back for me until five o'clock in the afternoon. I was given no lunch. Then the officer came for me, and I was questioned until way into the night.

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Next day I was put through the "third degree." I will not attempt to describe the grilling which I got, but take my word it was a fearful ordeal.

CHAPTER XXXVI

THREATENED WITH CRUCIFIXION

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When it was apparent to the Germans that they were able to get no satisfaction from me and could not intimidate me into admitting that I was paid by the British Government, they tried more effective measures.

I am frank to admit that during the whole of the proceeding I was frightened. I will go even further than that and confess I was scared nearly to death.

Physically I was intimidated and terrorized and at times I could realize and even see that my knees were shaking, and trembling from fright. Yet strange as it may sound, mentally I was calm and cool and kept my wits about me perfectly. And, my friends, you can say what you please about the delusions that men have of God's presence, and about the "Onlooking Father" being merely a dream-fancy of the imagination, but you can't talk to me with any effect and replace your fatalism for my faith! I'm not theorizing now, for I *know*! I know that an unseen Friend held my life in those awful moments and overruled the designs of those inhuman officials. I admit that I was scared—scared stiff—and yet, at the same time, never did I become confused mentally; not once did I make a single conflicting statement, nor in any way give those inquisitors any ground

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whatever for confirming their suspicions. If I had made a single break, or even become excited, or protested innocence, or appealed to the American diplomats, or anything of the kind, the effect would have been very bad for me. I simply let those hell-hounds go to it and do their worst, and as God is in heaven I believe to this day that my cool bearing and mental composure had a tremendous influence with them. To speak United States, "it got their goat." If you quail before a German, or show fear, he's got you.

And when as a last resort they threatened me with the most awful punishment that is conceivable, I still stood firm. They said I would tell what I knew or they would know the reason why.

A big, burly brute then took me out into a big court-yard and showed me a fence which had a cross painted on it. As we stepped out the back door, four soldiers were lined up out there with their rifles and gleaming bayonets. Another man had a hatchet in his hand and a pan of short spikes. [Pg 206]

The detective who brought me out then told me in a confidential tone that if I did not make a clean sweep of the whole affair and tell them my mission and my activities in that country they were going to crucify me at once. I believe I flushed red, but not from fright. Anger such as I never want to return to my poor soul seized hold of me as I shouted into his teeth, "You can crucify me, sir, but you can only make yourself a criminal, not me; God help you!"

There was a moment's silence. Then, "Bring him in," the man said quietly to the soldiers, and I was taken into the room where I had been before. I now felt a little more confidence, for I felt that I had cowed them down and thereafter they did not seem to be quite so cold and arrogant. But I was put into the hands of a different man. They have such a wonderful system of dodging responsibility and of passing you over to other people. I do not believe that cowardly cur dared to deal with me any longer and I never saw him again. I was now given over to Laubenthal, a very tall, business-like fellow, who seemed to have great authority. He asked me many more questions, writing down the answers and seeming to put in his own ideas, and then he told me to sign the paper, which was several pages long. He said it was simply my own story, and like a fool, I wrote my name to it, before I really knew what it was I was signing. [Pg 207]

Later, when I thought what it might be, I trembled. It might have been my death warrant!

Over an hour passed, not much was said for a time. I was in the same room where Edith Cavell was sentenced and out of which she was taken through the back door, lined up against a blank wall and shot. Presently, at an ominous moment, Laubenthal stepped over to the wall and took down a white cloth. Holding it dangling conspicuously by the corner he started over toward my chair. My spine went ice. I thought he was going to tie it about my eyes and I was going to be taken out the back door and stood up against the blank wall. All my former sins came back. I faced eternity. It was an awful moment, but quickly passing from the sublime to the ridiculous, do you know I never realized before what a difference there is in the way a man can carry a rag! If he had taken it by the middle, as any decent, sane man would do, I might have thought he was going to do what I believe he eventually did, wash his hands and use it as a towel. Holding it by that corner, however, looked too suspicious for me. It was an innocent rag, but he carried it in a funny way, and without joking, I will say that I have had a wholesome respect for a rag ever since. I now believe he was purposely trying to scare me. Well, if he was, he certainly succeeded. Von Bissing then came in and gave me a ten minute curtain lecture which was anything but pleasant. After a time, however, evidently deciding that there was no case against me, Laubenthal went to the telephone and had a conversation in German. I heard him mention my name, but I did not know whether it meant release or execution, and there is quite a difference. Soon he called over to me and asked me if I was ready to leave that day. Like a flash I said, "Yes, sir; yes, sir." I had been ready for several days. He gave me a permit, saying, "Get out on the seven o'clock train tonight and don't come back." Well, I've been in the habit of missing trains all my life, but I was at that depot at six o'clock. I wouldn't have missed that train for all the iron crosses in the Kaiser's foundry. I got out. That is, I *started* for Holland. [Pg 208]

However, I was pulled off the train by a husky German soldier at the first stop this side of the Holland border, about two miles from the line, and told that my papers were not in order and I would be compelled to go back again to Brussels and get them changed. [Pg 209]

Now, Laubenthal had told me not to come back. I knew he meant it, too. And I didn't intend to go back—not that soon.

CHAPTER XXXVII

MY ESCAPE AND RETURN TO GOOD OLD FRANCE

Consequently while I started back toward Brussels, that night under cover of darkness I soon wheeled around and made for the Holland border—alone—on foot. Part of the way I crept on all fours. Sometimes I was compelled because of the barbed-wire entanglement, to crawl on my stomach. I went through mud and water and clambered over stones. Suddenly I heard two German sentries apparently arguing. Finally one let loose with an automatic and winged me in the leg. Although I twitched I never whimpered and kept crawling on. At last the two miles were [Pg 210]

traversed and I found myself in Holland. The first Dutchman I saw (and please don't mistake a Dutchman for a German) I will always remember. He was coming toward me with a lantern, and when he heard me he called out to know who it was. I answered "An American." He then came smiling toward me and greeted me with a hearty handshake, but I was laughing through tears. I slapped him on the shoulder and exclaimed, "Say, old top, you're the first human being I've seen for many weeks. I have been in the hands of those cursed German brutes and they made life fearful for me." Of course he didn't know what "old top" meant but I didn't care anyway. He bandaged up my slight wound and sent me on my way. I was now mad at the Huns, and good and mad, but I was on my way to France. I was in the hands of sympathetic friends instead of hardened foes and I was happy in spite of my anger. I had seen Belgium and had obtained the evidence. Whereas before I had jerked off my frock coat and then later had shed my vest and gritted my teeth, I now began rolling up my sleeves for the Allies. Righteous indignation took the upper hand of pacifism. When I went back to The Hague and told Dr. Van Dyke my story, he was astonished. I did not tell it all, but related enough to considerably startle him.

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I had slipped by the consuls, had seen Belgium, had finally escaped, and was now to be passed on to England. I had no further difficulties, and in two days was off for Tilbury Docks. When I got there I was taken aside and searched, but there was none of that terrorism about it which the Germans had used. They had searched me thoroughly thirteen times.

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The English officers asked me several leading questions, whether I had seen any movement of troops and what was the food condition, etc. As I did not have any particular military information, I was soon dismissed and got my pass to France.

I now went down to the railway station and got my uniform where I had checked it. When I crossed the channel and went into France I had a funny experience. I went up to the railroad ticket office and asked for a special rate ticket to Paris (one-fourth fare). The woman asked, "Have you papers to show that you are military?" I said, "No, Madame, I have none with me." And I was having an awful time with my French. Just then young Du Boucher stepped up to the window. He was an old friend from Paris, and he looked good to me. He had just come from Etaples and spoke perfect French and perfect English. Besides, he was a good fellow. His father was one of the main surgeons and founder of our hospital in Neuilly. But with all that, we could not persuade the woman to give me a military ticket. She said to come back later and see the officer. Then Du Boucher said he would stay with me and see me through. When we went back we found a grouchy officer. We asked him for a military pass. When he asked for our papers I gave him my "leave of absence." He looked at it and said, "My dear sir, you are a deserter. This paper gives you ten days' leave and you have been gone much longer. You must come back and see the colonel at eight o'clock."

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I told him my train would go to Paris at seven-thirty. He didn't hear me at all. He said, "This is very serious, and you must see the colonel." I then told him I wasn't really military, don't you know, as the ambulance service was in reality neutral, so I was not a deserter. "Oh, I see," said he. "You're not really military, and why then are you attempting to buy a military ticket? This is still more serious. You must see the colonel."

I was scared green.

However, when we came back to see the colonel we found a very affable human man, who said he couldn't do anything for us about a special ticket if we had no papers to show that we were entitled to it, but that we could go to the window and make a try at getting it. Again we did so. A different agent was at the window, and we went up and asked him for such a ticket. He handed it out without a question.

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For the next two minutes I can tell you we did some laughing. We were compelled to stay over night, but at any rate I did not have to face court-martial as a deserter, and in the morning I was in Paris. There is nothing like having a fluent speaker of French with you in France, especially when you are in trouble. I was now back again in the good old country. Dear old France, how good it looked! My heart had been changed and I now immediately went into action again, under the colors of France. The fighting had been very heavy and some terrible scenes were shortly to be witnessed. Hundreds of men were now literally ground to pieces on the Western front.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

NO MAN'S LAND

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In the French Army, now, I had a different standing than at first. Our unit in its entirety was taken over and we became *brancardiers*, or stretcher bearers, in the Second Army of France. Accordingly we were quartered in the army barracks. For some time after I got back from Belgium there were days of blood and thunder as a fearful offensive had been launched by the Germans.

An entire change of heart had now come over me. I who had been a kind of peaceful milk and water ecclesiastical pacifist to now stand beside the boys with the guns and even sleep with the poilus whose main object is to kill Germans, and approve of it, was unusual to say the least, and I thought it would shock some of the deacons back in my tranquil church at home. I was ready to

even risk a guess that some of my befrocted clerical friends would be surprised. But I figured that when universal freedom was at stake, as I now clearly saw it was, I could not afford to be a neutral even though I was a Presbyterian preacher. I could not resist my conscience.

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As I look at it now, I wish they would put a number of these "conscientious objectors" into the same kind of service. That experience was the best thing that ever happened to me. I became enthusiastic for the Allies and the war, and dead against the Kaiser and his gang.

Soon after this I was dispatched to a certain place near L— for duty. I found a man who had just been out on a wire-cutting expedition. As I lifted him on to the stretcher he said, "Well, I did it anyhow." Then with some effort he related the following experience to me:

"When the order was given that we would go 'over the top' at three o'clock in the morning, and take the Germans' first line trench, our boys were ready. There was no 'try to take it' nor 'attack it,' but 'we will go over the top and take it.' There was a note of finality in the wording of the order, which we well understood. Our lieutenant then came down to our fire bay and asked who would volunteer to go out at midnight and cut the lanes. He was looking right at me, and said 'Vincent, how about it?' I timidly replied, 'I'll go, sir.' There was no way out. I am frank to confess that after I got to thinking about it, my knees began to shake. The more I thought, the worse they got. I had given my word, though, and I wouldn't be a quitter. I don't think there is any yellow streak in me, but there is a lot of human nature. I love life. I got to thinking of my past and the words of Shakespeare ran in my mind, 'Conscience doth make cowards of us all.' I wasn't scared, I was paralyzed.

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"I realized what it meant that I had promised to do. It meant that I was to climb up a scaling ladder over our parapet, go out into the full exposure of the enemy, crawl on my stomach slowly—slowly again—an inch at a time—so slowly that if a German saw me, he would not know I was moving at all, and would suppose me dead. I must cover the distance between our parapet and our entanglement, which was perhaps a dozen yards, with a tripping wire in between, then noiselessly cut a lane through twenty feet of knotted and gnarled barbed wire, fastening it back so that it could not curl up and entangle our men as they rushed through. Then I must creep and crawl on my stomach, hugging the ground until I got back and slid into our trench. If I were seen, it was all day with me. I'd go to Blighty—for good.

"Well, twelve o'clock came around—all too soon. I went. When I had cut my first wire, a German star shell fell, lighting up the barbed-wire entanglement for rods around. Luckily for me it fell short of the parallel in which I was, to the trenches. If it had fallen back of me, it would have thrown my body into bold relief."

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For the readers' benefit be it said that a star shell is something like a sky rocket or a roman candle. It is sent up into the air and falls to the ground, lighting up everything around it. The purpose of it is to betray any action of the enemy in No Man's Land. Obviously, if it falls short, it blinds the sender to what is going on beyond it, just as a light in the window of a house will not throw the objects in the room into view from the outside, especially if the spectator is some distance away. But objects can be plainly seen in the room by a person across the street, if the light is on the far side of the room. This is particularly true if the object should move. So with the star shell. But it must frighten one at best to be lying on his stomach and have the whole world illuminated about him even if he is behind the light.

In slower and lower tones the poilu continued:

"I had just cut my last wire and folded it back on the post—I don't think thirty seconds had passed—when a star shell came down between me and my own trench and glimmered away as if it never would go out. It may have burned for thirty seconds, but that thirty seconds seemed like thirty years to me.

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"I was less than forty yards from the German trenches, and I believe within thirty yards of their barbed wire. As that star shell came down, I had my hand upon a post about a foot from the ground. And as it was, I was really grasping the barbed wire, wrapped around the post, and thus assisting myself to crawl back to our trenches. Although the wire was cutting my fingers fiercely, I dared not let loose of that post, for fear the Germans would detect the motion and let me have it hot and heavy. Just before the star shell burned out, I distinctly heard some German voices. One man said, 'There, look there!' Then the star shell went out. Expecting another immediately, I dared not move or withdraw my hand. It came. Again I could hear those Germans talking, this time arguing about me, instead of shooting me, and when that star shell went out, I pulled myself up by the aid of that post and ran as I never ran in my life before. I believe I broke the world's record.

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"And then, at last, they began to shoot, and just as I fell into our trenches, one of them caught me here." His breathing was labored as he placed his hand on his side.

"But somehow, when a fellow is out there—alone—facing death in the solitude, it seems so much worse than it is two hours later, when the boys go 'over the top,' dozens of them together, with bayonets gleaming and with yelling and shooting and barrage fire. It doesn't seem nearly so bad in a crowd. I don't mean that the men like it. No man ever likes to go 'over the top,' but there is a hypnotism when the crowd goes with you. It is what the professors call mob psychology. It's the thing that will make a man jump into a scrimmage on the football field eagerly, knowing that he will get hurt, without thinking anything about it. But I went alone. I'm all right but I feel ——" Here his breath came hard.

"The charge was set for three o'clock. A fearful bombardment was opened up. The barrage fire was terrific. Word was finally passed along from mouth to mouth, 'ten minutes till we go over the top!' All the while the bombardment had been going on more fiercely and the firing was let loose, the like of which was never seen before.

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"At last it was five minutes of three. The 'death ladders' were put in place, so the men could scale the parapet, and at exactly three o'clock the whistles blew a mighty blast. Up the boys went like monkeys over a garden wall. The curtain fire was thrust forward. Through the lanes they went. Across No Man's Land they rushed, and men were falling all about. At this moment some of the Germans made a kind of countercharge, and a few got very near our trenches. One big German was almost falling into our trench on top of me, when I heard him yell at me. I could not tell what he said, but as his mouth opened in yelling, amazement and fear gripped me, for, like the shiny tongue of a snake, there stuck out of his mouth a long, glistening object. I thought he was making faces at me. But only a second elapsed, until his yell merged into a fiendish shriek and he pitched toward me. One of our men had jammed his bayonet through the big Boche from behind, and it had come out of his mouth. It was the last of him. I know our boys got there. But it sure is hell. But—it—is glorious!" I then realized that he was weakening and when I asked him if he was badly hurt he answered, "No—not bad—I reckon—only—'goin' West." As the poor fellow spoke these last words his breath was coming hard. Life was slowly ebbing out and as I stood with his hand clasped in mine he passed over the Great Divide. In solemn reflection I stood beside him for a moment. Yes, it was glorious, in a way, yet for my part it sickened me. I had had enough. I was fed up with the war and I longed for rest.

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CHAPTER XXXIX

JEAN AND "FRENCHIE"

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That rest was to come ere long—but not immediately. I had seen the tragedy and horror of modern warfare but I was still to undergo another heart-tearing ordeal. The boys of a certain company were as handsome a lot as ever donned a uniform. But some of the best of them were marked men. Two of these fellows whom I had come to consider as pals, got theirs a few days later. The name of one was Jean, and I couldn't pronounce the other, so I used to call him "Frenchie." They were both fine, strapping lads, larger than the average Frenchman and had the pep of young Americans. Jean was twenty-one and "Frenchie" I suppose about twenty-five. We used to have great times together trying to understand each other and laughing over my mistakes in speaking French. Some of them were worth laughing at, too.

On occasions I would sit and swap yarns with them or would yield to their requests to tell them all about the United States. We struck up an intimacy which was unusual, and it got so that we sought each other's company whenever possible. The boys used to ask me all kinds of questions about New York and wanted to know how far out Pike's Peak was from the metropolis. I had to laugh at their conception of American geography as much as they did at my conception of their language. Many a pleasant hour we enjoyed together.

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But alas! One Sunday afternoon a gas alarm was suddenly sounded. All the men along the trench began excitedly fumbling for their gas masks and shouting to one another. That was the very worst thing that they could do. Remaining cool and keeping your mouth shut is the only possible method of combating this awful weapon. You must lose no time in shaking off your metal trench helmet and getting the gas mask on and buttoned tightly around your neck, but the way to save time is to go about it coolly. Now "Frenchie" had become excited and couldn't find his mask. It wasn't in his bag provided for the purpose. He had lost it. In his excitement, instead of wetting his handkerchief and tying it over his nose as a temporary substitute, he began yelling at the other boys, asking them if they had seen it or if they had an extra one. In doing this he had taken in several breaths of the deadly fumes and was quickly overcome. He was carried back into the receiving station and there he lay in agony. When I got there two men were bending over him as he lay upon the stretcher and with a fan and oxygen tube, they were trying to assist him in getting air into his lungs. I went over and spoke to him, but his eyes were closed and he could not answer. For ten or fifteen minutes we worked with him, but it seemed like eternity. As his eyelids twitched, his throat contracted, and his nostrils distended in the awful effort to get air; I thought I should faint as I was forced to look upon his indescribable suffering. When once or twice I asked him something the agonizing efforts which he made to speak to me were terrible to behold. I would rather die myself than ever have to look on such a sight again. Death isn't hard to see and the sight of it becomes commonplace on the battle line. But the spectacle of a fellow-human going through the slow agonies of the damned, in his vain attempts to get air, is one which no mortal ought ever to be called upon to undergo.

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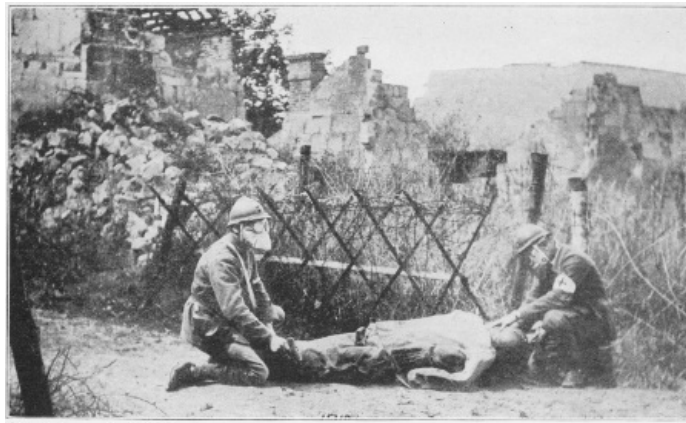


Photo by International Film Service.

AMBULANCE MEN WORKING OVER A "GASSED" SOLDIER.

Of course I cannot know how much actual pain he felt, as it is possible that the gas deadened his nerves and yet caused him to twitch in this awful manner; but if poor "Frenchie" suffered any worse than I did in those few minutes, he is better off dead than living. Finally he turned a bluish green color and at last gave one great gulp and died. It was with heavy hearts that we carried him out and then I went back to the depot. [Pg 226]

The Boches had made a terrific charge on about a quarter of a mile front, but were repulsed with very heavy losses. Naturally our brave boys were exulting over the fact that they had stood their ground and made the Germans quickly retreat, leaving numbers of their men upon the field. I was not very jubilant, however, because the thought of poor "Frenchie" was still in my mind. Then another shock came to me. I had gone back to the depot only to find my other comrade, Jean, lying on a piece of canvas on the floor with a bandage around his head. His face was turned away from me and a man was administering temporary treatment. I asked him what was the matter, and upon hearing my voice Jean answered for himself. "Well, I guess I got mine that time, but you can bet I gave a good account of myself first. It is all for *La Belle France*, anyway, and I am damn glad it happened!" He became weak then, and didn't speak any more. As soon as I got the chance, I asked the soldier standing by more particularly about the nature of the wound and he said in a low and faltering voice: "Jean will recover all right, for his wound is not fatal at all, but," and he broke down as he continued, "he'll never see light again. The poor fellow has both eyes shot out." [Pg 227]

And then he told me what a wonderful fight Jean had put up first, accounting for four Germans in hand-to-hand fighting. Poor Jean! He will grope his way through life! But the thing that impressed me most was his inner feeling, "It's all for *La Belle France*, and I'm damn glad it happened!"

You can't whip a nation like that.

CHAPTER XL

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF FRANCE

I had a sort of habit, when I had time off from the work, or was "on my own," of sometimes going to the railroad stations of the different towns and more especially those of Paris. A railroad station is an interesting place at any time. It is an educational institution, for there you find all classes of humanity coming and going, just as they are. It is where the ebb and flow of the human tide of life is. [Pg 228]

But I think in this time of war, especially, there is no place which so well shows up the psychology of the people as the railroad depot. Often have I stood in those large Paris stations and watched the people come and watched them go. The Gare du Nord, the Gare du Lyons, and the Gare la Chapelle are full of sentiment and pathos.

Once at the last named station I was standing in the background in the shadow of a pillar, where I was unobtrusive and unnoticed, and watched the anxious people. Some of them were looking for their loved ones back on leave, and some of them had come to see their loved ones leave, perhaps forever! [Pg 229]

I saw a young wife approach the gate with her husband. The brave little woman had escorted her *mari* to the station as he was leaving for the trenches, to take his place there in the mud and blood. And yet, as she stood there and talked to him outside the gates, she was exceptionally merry and vivacious. Then just as he went through the gates to board the train, she kissed him and waved him a cheery *au revoir* and stood smilingly, waving as he went out of sight.

And then—I saw that brave French woman turn around, and, as she walked away or almost stumbled away, become shaken with a paroxysm of sobs and grief, as though the heart were wrenched out of her breast.

How she did weep!

But she would not let her husband see it for anything in the world, for she felt she must keep him up so that he could fight the battle. That was her bit for *La Belle France*. And I have seen that same thing repeated very many times.

I have often watched strong men come into the depots with their brothers who were going to the trenches. And as they talked with those dear ones who were going out to meet the foe, they would be happy and buoyant in their manner, and as they separated, they would kiss each other like young lovers, with prolonged and passionate kisses, for both realized that they might never meet again. And the cheery *au revoir* which they waved to each other meant "Till we meet again," probably "over West." But they did not then show a trace of sadness. The soldier would board his train and the man who was left behind would turn away, convulsed with weeping; but he wouldn't let his brother see it. It was all for *La Belle France*.

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The soul of the French is a wonderful thing. They have a calm confidence that finally the invader will be vanquished, and that confidence goes a long way toward the goal. Not so many years since, the French were looked upon by many as being an enervated, effeminate people. I suppose the tourists who visited Paris had taken their impressions from a few of the men and women whom they had observed in the cafés and public places. At any rate, a great many Americans thought that as a nation she was degenerating and decaying, but France has proven to the world that such an impression is not true, and no one has learned this lesson better than the German. Today I believe Germany respects France more highly than any other of her enemies. This great Republic has conducted through these years such a remarkable war, and all the while kept up such a magnificent spirit that she has placed herself in the very front rank of the world's great powers. The secret of it all is the wonderful psychological attitude of the French people who go to make up the country, and if America can demonstrate a spirit which parallels it in the trying days to come, it will bode well for the outcome of the war.

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I am glad I went. My part, though humble, in this great struggle for human freedom, has done worlds for me, and I shall always rejoice that I had that profound experience. Physically, I overdid things, yet I wanted to do more. Everybody does. I often took foolish chances as I now see, but I am not sorry for it. I got little sleep and insufficient food, but I was happy in my work. Not infrequently as I worked I had realized the danger, but I didn't seem to care. Forgetting my own best interests, I guess I often did more than I should have done. But these things cannot last forever. The body wearies, the brain tires, the nerves fatigue, there comes about a physical condition when the members of the body simply refuse to obey orders. Such a condition I suppose had come upon me. For some time I had felt it coming, but I still did not let up, though I was working like a man in a dream.

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At last, however, my nerves completely gave way. I saw that I must give up the work entirely and with great regret was forced to do so. I was given my release and a military ticket, but I was loath to leave the country which had opened my eyes to the deeper values of life. The people that I had met and the atmosphere in which I had labored had brought a new meaning to the words "Life" and "Liberty," and I felt I was better fitted for my duty toward humanity. I had gained a something over there which I never got before in all the years of my academic education and a strange emotion tugged at my heart at the thought of leaving France. I vowed that if possibility presented itself I would return again to help the poilus.

CHAPTER XLI THE CONTAGIOUS SPIRIT OF SACRIFICE

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Out there on the Western front a marvelous spirit seems to have possession of the people. I doubt if the world ever saw such a close and intimate communion of millions upon millions of men banded together for one mighty purpose, namely, the preservation of Liberty on the earth. Men endure suffering and women undergo hardships such as they never dreamed to be possible. In every age Liberty has had its champions and morality its martyrs, but there never was a time when such hosts of crusaders from every corner of the world with one accord marched forth to sacrifice for a common cause. Men seem to vie with one another as to who can do the most. Hardship is accepted with a jest. Women with sleepless eyes watch over sufferers on beds of pain, never thinking of self but rather losing themselves in the great purpose for which it is all endured. They seem to have a vision which is almost superhuman. Most of us can see only today and its security and happiness; but these messengers are looking to the welfare of their children's children to the third and fourth generation. To them the general good of Humanity looms up and eclipses all considerations of personal comfort or convenience. And so they keep on toiling and enduring through the months.

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At one time when I was in a hospital I made my way down to a room where the ladies were serving four o'clock tea. I arrived just a few moments too late, and much to my chagrin the ladies were clearing away the dishes. I saw a woman carrying a plate full of cakes—all that were left—

out of the room and up to the wounded soldiers above. I stopped her, jokingly, saying, "I'm going to steal one of those cakes. I came late." She graciously held the plate out to me while I helped myself, saying as she did so, "You boys deserve them if anybody does. We can't do enough for you."

A moment later she stepped out, and I said to the lady who handed me a cup of tea, "I almost lost my cake today as I was late. What is the woman's name who took the plate upstairs?" Her answer stunned me. "That's Mrs. Vanderbilt," she said modestly.

And then I began to think. What was Mrs. Vanderbilt doing over there working in a hospital? What are all the influential and wealthy people doing now, to lighten the burden and help the cause? There is certainly a sympathy between the high and low which was never known before anywhere in the world.

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This day as I sat there, I suppose with a rather serious expression on my face, a nurse put in her appearance. "Why, my friend," she said, "what makes you look so sober?" "Oh, nothing," I said, and tried to smile. "Yes, but there is and you must tell me," she persisted. "I was thinking about America's pacifists," I answered. "I used to be one myself, but I now see that they are injuring the cause that these brave fellows are dying for, and they ought to be severely punished. My own effectiveness is hampered and has become insignificant because of my former attitude, but from now on I am going to stand up for the fighting soldier every time."

"Your idea is right," answered the nurse. "The pacifists back in the States who have been objecting to the government's policy and who have dodged and evaded their duty, ought to be put in jail. But," and she emphasized her statement with her index finger, "you are a bit hard on yourself, I think, and your work is not insignificant. You have tried to do your little bit here to atone for having been a pacifist and now it is possible that you may do much in the States by your voice and pen to rouse the people of America to their patriotic duty. You may teach them many lessons."

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"I myself have learned one great lesson over here," I said. "I have learned that in order to find happiness one must lose himself. He must give up himself in a worthy cause."

"I understand," replied the nurse. "I can see that you have become imbued with the spirit of sacrifice which seems contagious here in this land. Everybody has it."

"Well, I don't know about that," I said, "but whatever you may say, I do know this: I know that those poor fellows out there in the mud have given all they've got to make the world safe from Germany, and we ought to do the same. The one who is a pacifist now, is a slacker, a traitor, and in reality, a murderer. He is prolonging the war and thus sacrificing additional lives. I know that the Man who gave His life on the cruel cross, two thousand years ago, gave it for liberty, the same as these soldiers are doing today, and when I read in the American papers now and then of some of the obstructionists in our own country, who are railing at the President and scoffing at what is being done to prepare our army, I can't express myself."

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"You must be patient though," she said, "for such men will come to their deserts, and I am so glad that I have had the pleasure of knowing you, and as you take your departure, I want you to know that I shall always remember you in the first capacity in which I knew you, as an ambulance worker, and because of your activity in saving lives—for that above all is the one thing I am interested in."

CHAPTER XLII

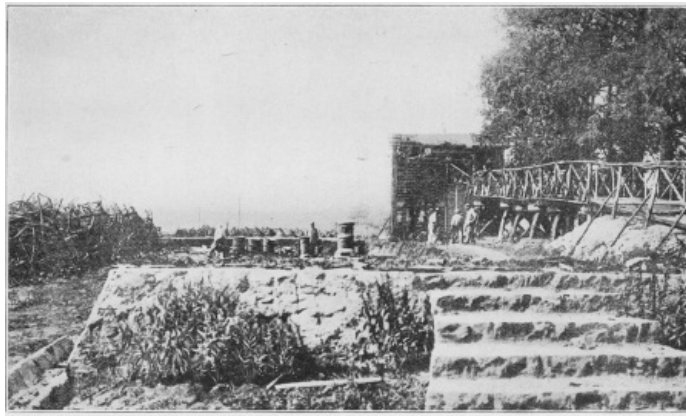
THE HERITAGE OF HATE

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The blackest aspect of the sin which Germany has committed in this war is not to be found in the ruined churches and the devastated homes. The vandalistic crime which asserted itself in destroying school-houses and libraries and works of art, in desolating the fields and laying low the country, sinks into the background when compared with the wickedness of sowing that heritage of hate in untold millions of hearts—a hate which will endure and bear fruit against her long after the present conflict has passed into history.

Ernest Lissauer, in his well-known "hymn" expressed the venom and hatred of Germany for those of other nations who do not concede her the right of world conquest, and was decorated for it by the Emperor. And although an attempt was made to suppress the hymn after the Germans realized its detriment to themselves the seed had been sown far and wide and could not be recalled. Germany had spread race hatred in the world, and that is the greatest barrier there is to human progress.

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DESTRUCTION OF A FRENCH HOSPITAL BY A GERMAN BOMB.

Utter disregard of humanity's laws is the German way of fighting. The photograph shows the basement of a hospital after it had been deliberately bombed by the Germans. To the left can be seen a mass of iron beds and human bodies intermingled. Such is German "Kultur."

Universal brotherhood for which Jesus lived and died, and for which the noblest men have always lived, has been turned back a thousand years by Germany, and that is her great crime. That is the accusation for which her military leaders will have to answer before the bar of God on the solemn Judgment Day. She sowed to the wind and she reaps the whirlwind. Not only has she stirred up bitterness and hate in the breasts of her own people, but by her foul deeds, the offspring of that hatred, she has planted a hate in the very beings and natures of the people of her enemy countries which almost equals it. In the earlier days of the war it was occasionally said that there was no hatred between the opposing soldiers and that the people of the conquered territories often fraternized with the German invaders. It was a lie. Although the men of France and Belgium were very scarce in the towns and cities, because most of them had gone to the trenches, and although the women were perhaps lonesome for companionship, yet woe be to that insulting German soldier who attempted to converse or walk with a French girl on the street, for he would receive such a withering look and answer as would make the blood run cold in any man with an ounce of self-respect. The girls of the conquered countries today would rather play with serpents than hold any kind of conversation or have any social intercourse with the haughty invaders.

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In the beginning they tried to force their obnoxious attentions on the women; but they soon learned better and in the regions which they arrogantly possess today the German soldiers are the most shunned and lonely people that ever lived. Little babes just learning to talk are schooled to hate the Germans. Many a time I have seen young mothers with painstaking care drilling the little ones to lisp vengeance upon their enemy. Instead of the affectionate terms of "papa" and "mamma" which all nationalities first teach the infant the outraged inhabitants pronounce the words *Les Allemands Boche*, and *The Kaiser Kaput*. "The Germans are contemptible" and "Cut the head off the Kaiser."

No man need tell me that this universal feeling will soon die away and that when peace comes about normal relations will soon be restored. It is not human nature. Like the snake in the garden of Eden which brought the hatred of the race upon itself so that evermore "the heel of mankind shall crush the serpent's head," so has Germany brought down the maledictions of the human race upon her head, so that for a long time to come the hand of every man will be against her. This is the sad part of it all and this is the crime for which Germany will yet give account. I heard one soldier, who had had more than ordinary experience with their method of atrocity, say: "I'd like to have every man, woman, and child in Germany killed without mercy and I'd like to be there with the bayonet to finish up the job!"

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I maintain that if God be just, not that man, but his enemy who drove him to that attitude will be held to account for his fearful hatred. When history is written and when Germany, instead of profiting by her sin, shall be eating the bitter fruits of her own unrighteousness then shall the Scripture be fulfilled in her ears, "Ye cannot gather grapes of thorns nor figs of thistles." "The way of the transgressor is hard," and "In like manner as ye sow, so shall ye reap, full measure, heaped up, shaken together, running over."

It is not merely a penalty placed by the Allied nations upon an offending country. It is not simply that we shall say we will "get even with her" and will take revenge for all her inhuman outrages, but it is that the immutable fiat of God goes forth, and that the one who flings himself against that great law shall pay to the uttermost farthing.

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CHAPTER XLIII "BACK FROM HELL"

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My fists are now clinched! I am fighting now. My experience as I have here given it, drives me to this inevitable conclusion. Germany, as she now is organized, cannot be tolerated in a modern world. She must be vanquished! Bloodshed is not the worst thing in life. The slaughter of the men who are enslaving and killing millions is today a Christian duty, so help me God!

To me has come the Great Awakening. I have surrendered myself to Him. America, the strongest democracy of history, has undertaken to fight and defeat the Kaiser. Every man, woman, and child in this nation must be mobilized in order to guarantee this outcome. In this supreme, vital hour, the pacifist and the slacker shall suffer the damnation of hell! Fighters are patriots—pacifists are traitors. The whole nation must undergo a rigid system of preparedness to accomplish this great task of safe-guarding our own and the world's liberties, and further than that, to make a more stalwart citizenship than we now possess. We need a more robust young manhood than we have. We are living in the greatest Republic the world ever saw. We have more liberty than any land on earth—more than some people know how to use sensibly. But "eternal vigilance is the price of liberty," therefore, my people, arouse! I plead, and get behind the government with every ounce of energy and support that you can muster. Buy Liberty Bonds, give to the Red Cross, conserve the food, encourage the drafted men, enlist yourself in some branch of the Service and Help to Win This War! If you can't go, remember this: You must equip the brave fellows who do go. As my friend said to me, "None of us must think his part insignificant."

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Out there, it is a fact that the spirit of sacrifice is contagious. No man counts his life dear to himself. It must become so here. Every shoulder is required at the wheel, as our foe is a monstrous one.

I labor under no delusions as to the weakness of the enemy. Germany is still powerful and will fight with the desperation of an animal that is cornered, and we must prepare for a long, hard battle. Universal Service today is the one thing which is saving America and civilization. Always remember that. And our youths need it to make men of them mentally and physically. Our boys need it for their own good and the good of the future. It is a preparation for life that we need in America and with it we will be prepared for anything.

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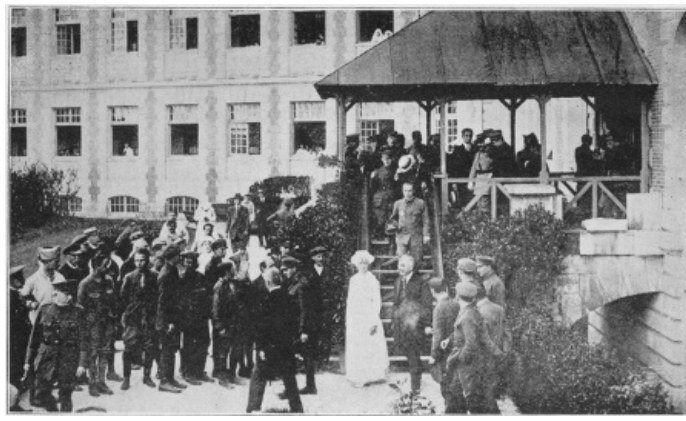
We have had perhaps too much liberty in our land, and it has often made boys a lawless, careless, disrespectful, slouchy crowd, thinking only of what they can get out of life and not of what they can give in the way of service. These are not my personal opinions. They are well-known facts and the highest army officers have bitterly complained of them. Even the father who is against Universal Service will admit their truth. The boys of America need to learn courtesy, obedience, respect, efficiency. Their hearts are right and the present fault is not entirely their own. They have not been disciplined. Let us now be wise.

I am closing up my little book. I'm back from hell. Back from the hell made by the Kaiser and his German hordes in Europe. But also, and more significantly, back from the hell of pacifism, when God is crying, "Militancy, my son!" Back from the hell which says, "Sleep on, thou sluggard, in thy peace and cowardice, while God, and the other nations are awake and doing, against the wicked adversary." Back from the hell which whispers, "Lose thy soul, but save thy skin." Back from the hell in which men like David Starr Jordan and Mr. Bryan and my humble self have been. Pacifism is hell, when heaven challenges the soul to fight. So I am going to fight. I have found my soul through war. I'm a saved man. I'm happy at last and I am going to preach it now. I am going to speak and write as long as I have power, to help America win the war primarily, and then to help make America a better country by making her people better citizens, and thus help to make this place we live in a better world.

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We must fear God and down the Kaiser. And I do not know of any more fitting words that could be used in closing up this little war message to the American people, from a common, humble helper, than those of our great National Anthem:

*Then conquer we must, for our cause it is just,
And this be our motto:—"In God Is Our Trust."
The star-spangled banner in triumph shall wave
O'er the land of the free, and the home of the brave.*



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**AMERICAN HOSPITAL AT NEULLY TRANSFERRED TO
GENERAL PERSHING.**

**The ceremony at the transfer of the American Hospital
at Neuilly to General Pershing. The hospital was the
first American monument of sympathy for the French
Republic.**

And may the ideals of that flag and the flags of our noble Allies guide the destinies of the world, and Christ again become the guide of human life and Prussianistic Militarism be speedily ground to powder. [Pg 247]

No true social order can be erected upon a false foundation. Autocracy is false, pernicious, and rotten from top to bottom. Therefore it must be annihilated root and branch before the peoples of the earth can find freedom and happiness. The old structure must be entirely torn down and the social order built on a new foundation.

The United States has consecrated herself to this task. Stupendous as it is, she can accomplish it. France has done her part, Britain has performed her duty, but France and Britain today are calling to us. Not in any spirit of boastfulness therefore, but in a spirit of deep humility coupled with a determined confidence must we respond to their urgent plea. We must go, we must give, we must sacrifice. If America is to save the situation, as I believe she is, she must know beforehand that it will be at a price such as she has never paid before. Widows will pine and daughters will mourn. Rachel will weep in the midnight for her sons because they are not and orphans will cry themselves to sleep. But out of the blackness the consolation which comes to me is that through it all we will find our soul and we will obey the summons of a just and righteous God. To do less were craven. [Pg 248]

America, like other nations, may sometime go down. When we have accomplished our mission we too may pass off the stage of action. But, please God, when the names shall be called from the great Book of Life and the records of the nations now gone, shall be read, lack of vision and failure in duty shall not be charged against America; and, in the new and better world, America's part in making possible the higher order of things shall be recognized and acknowledged.

Every man has his duty. Every woman her sphere. There is nothing worth living for in the present hour but to assist in defeating Germany. And let me sound a warning here and now, loud and clear, that the person who is found unwilling or inactive in the accomplishment of this one goal will sooner or later feel the bitterness of what it is to be "a man without a country." He will come to hate himself.

On the other hand, he who does his part, who gives himself unstintedly in this hour of the world's woe, and who does not calculate the personal cost, will have the boundless and undying gratitude of future ages. These will have a part in the greatest humanizing and redemptive work since earth began and "the generations shall rise up and call them blessed." They also will be able to boast the honor of having been true Americans. [Pg 249]

As for myself, I know not what the future holds. My personal fortunes are in the hands of God and my country. The pastorate which I resigned has been filled by another.

But I do know this: that I have been used in the great cause of democracy in a hundred times larger way than I ever was before or ever could have been, had I not gone to the war and been converted to militant justice. I am hoping to go back again, but in the meantime the government has been using my humble services in a way which is most gratifying to me. I have traveled from one end of the continent to the other delivering lectures to American citizens and trying to rouse them to their duty. I have probably spoken to a million people, and I hope this book, with the same object in view, may reach as many more. And the people have been most kind to me. In places like Tremont Temple, Boston; Carnegie Hall, New York; and Orchestra Hall, Chicago, audiences of thousands have given me memorable ovations. And when I spoke for Dr. Hillis, in [Pg 250]

Henry Ward Beecher's old church, the congregation applauded to the echo, even though it was the Sabbath day. And all I ask for the future is that my life may be worn out for God and my country. *Au Revoir!*

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK "BACK FROM HELL" ***

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