

THE SILVER ON
THE IRON CROSS



JAMES I. VANCE

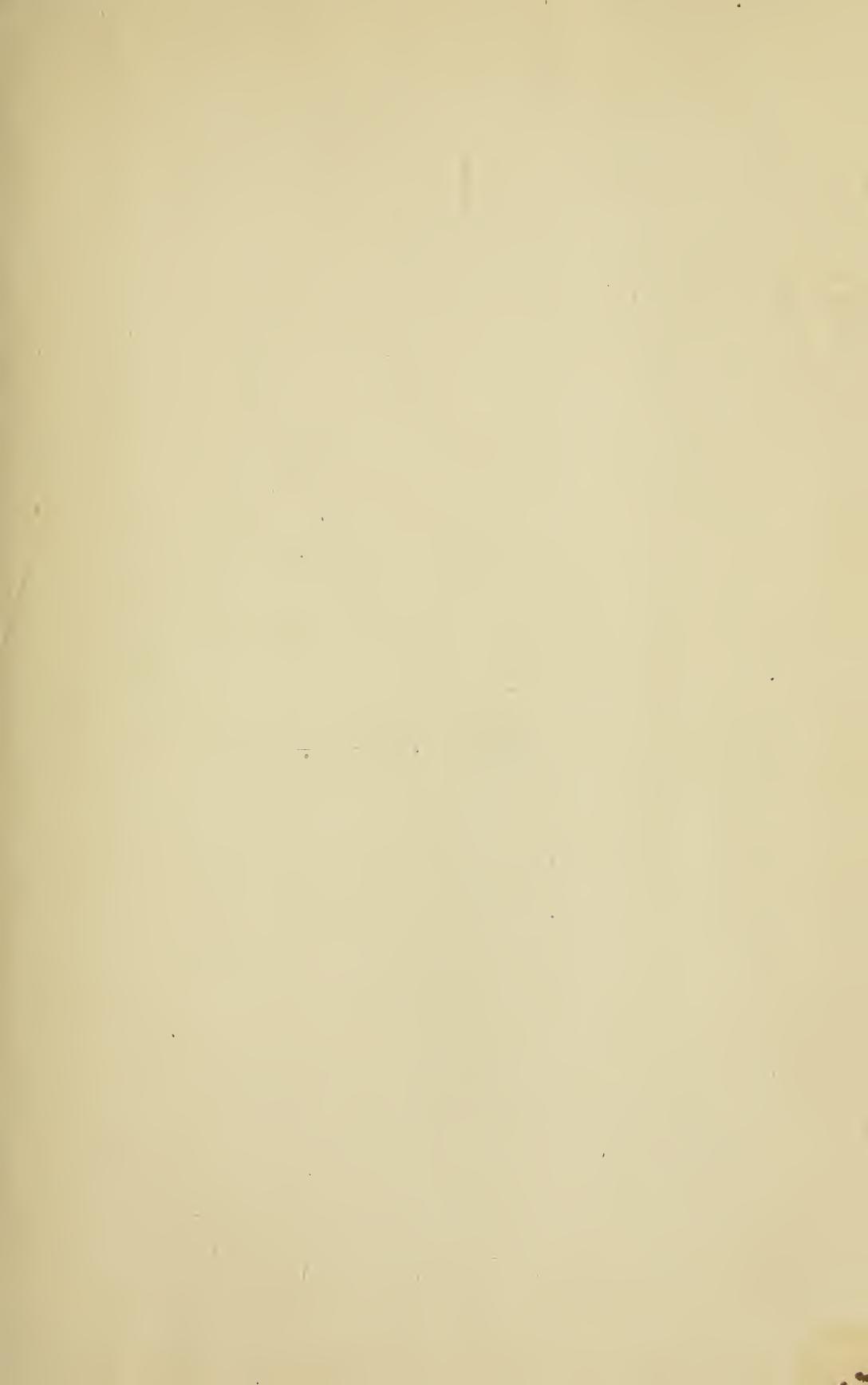


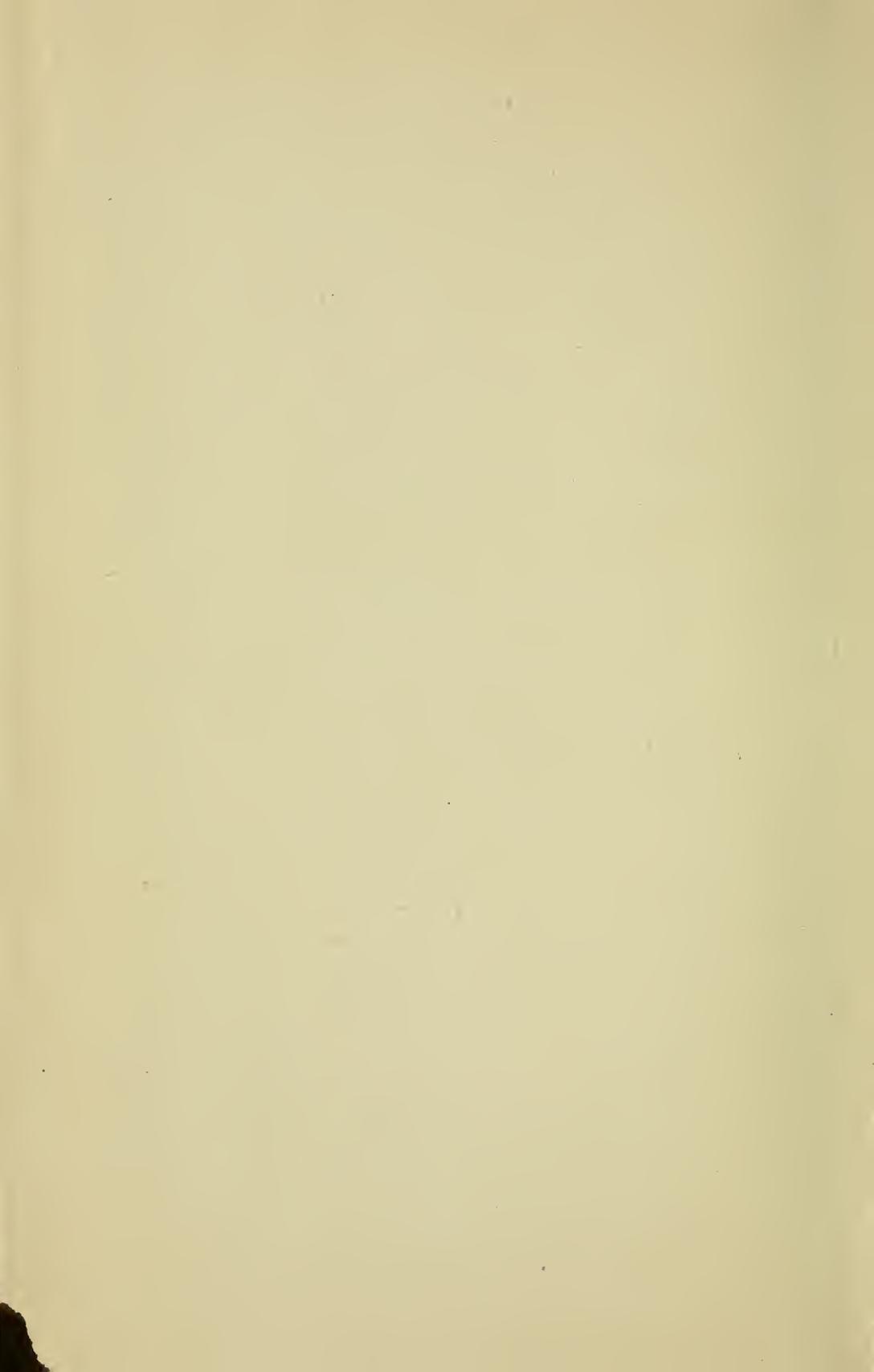
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By

JAMES I. VANCE

*Author of "The Young Man Foursquare," "Royal
Manhood," "Tendency," "The Life of Service,"
"Life's Terminals," "Rise of a Soul," etc.*



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Dedicated to
J O E
My Brother and Team-mate
Overseas

Contents

	FOREWORD	9
I.	THE INDIAN HEAD AT EHRENBREIT- STEIN	11
II.	THE TULIPS OF COUCY LE CHÂTEAU .	19
III.	A SOLDIER'S GRAVE	26
IV.	THE CAVE DWELLER OF JUVIGNY .	34
V.	THE BLACKSMITH OF POTHIERES .	41
VI.	HOLY COMMUNION IN WILDCAT HUT	48
VII.	A COMMISSION INSTEAD OF THE GUARD HOUSE	56
VIII.	GREEN APPLES AND ARMY CHOW . . .	65
IX.	A TESTAMENT OR A BOTTLE OF WINE .	78
X.	INTERNATIONALISM AT NEVERS . . .	88
XI.	THE HOUSE OF PEACE IN THE CRATER OF WAR	96
XII.	THE CHÂTEAU AT CLAYE	105
XIII.	IN THE GERMAN CHURCH AT NEUWIED	115

Foreword

WAR can be camouflaged, but it cannot change its nature. War is war as iron is iron. No alchemy has been discovered that will change iron into silver, and no trick of statecraft has been invented that can change war into a blessing.

To be sure, war may be made glorious when it becomes a fight for freedom or a struggle against the forces that would wreck the world; but even then it is not war that is glorious, but the passion for freedom in the human soul, and the crusade of chivalrous spirits against oppression.

Despite the roll of the drums and the pageantry of dress parade, war is war as iron is iron, and war's story is told on the sodden field where slain men rot; and in shell-torn plains and wrecked cities where lonely women and orphaned children wait

in broken homes for a day that will not return.

The Hun's war cross is made of iron, but he has edged this iron cross with silver. The iron of the cross is still iron and the silver remains silver; but the iron and the silver touch each other in the iron cross, as a bar of sunshine sometimes touches the edge of a storm cloud.

Thus is it with war. There is a silver edge to its iron cross. Amid all the unspeakable horrors of the world war there may be discovered by the eye that looks for the invisible, blessings that are imperishable and a glory which even war clouds cannot dim. In the chapters which follow there is no desire to hide the havoc war has wrought, but if we can find a bit of silver amid all the iron of these four years of fierce fighting, it may help weary hearts to look once more toward the morning and press on.

I

THE INDIAN HEAD AT EHRENBREIT- STEIN

THE Indian Head was the badge of the Second Division, and I saw the insignia on the "Gibraltar of the Rhine."

The Second Division may well be proud of its record in the world war. It contains the famous Fifth and Sixth Regiments of United States Marines, whose fighting at Château Thierry, where the German drive was halted and the turning point achieved in the conflict with the Hun, is a story of heroism that will stir the world as long as men cheer courage and honour daring. The Second Division has other units whose valour is not a whit behind that of the marines, and whose fighting record is as illustrious, but whose publicity has not been on as extensive a scale. Some idea of what the Second Division did at the front may be had

when it is remembered that its casualties were over one hundred per cent.

And the Second Division chose for its insignia the head of an American Indian on a white star. The feathers are there, and the war paint, and the look of a primitive man ready for battle. I saw the insignia painted by a doughboy on the Kaiser's proudest fortress on the Rhine.

It was at Ehrenbreitstein. Across the river is Coblenz, where the Moselle River empties into the "wide and winding Rhine." Ehrenbreitstein is a fortress crowning a great crag that lifts its precipitous sides sheer three hundred and eighty-seven feet from the banks of the river that flows at its feet. It was given by King Dagobert to the Archbishop of Treves in 606, destroyed by the French in 1801, and rebuilt in 1816-1826 at a cost of six million dollars. It is called the "Gibraltar of the Rhine."

From its embattlements one looks down on sites made famous by the deeds of war kings for two thousand years. Yonder a few kilometers down the river is Umnitz, where

INDIAN HEAD AT EHRENBREITSTEIN 13

in the year 55 B. C. Julius Cæsar built across the Rhine the bridge the story of whose construction recorded in his "Gallic War" has been the plague of many an American schoolboy. Some traces of the foundation of the ancient span endure. Up the Moselle River the Romans had their strongholds in the early occupancy of this country. Just beneath the fortress is Coblenz, one of the most historic cities of the German Empire.

In this city is the Castor Church. You are looking at its four giant towers and roof as you stand on the castled heights. The church was built in 836 and rebuilt in 1208. Charlemagne is said to have worshipped within its walls, and there his three grandsons met to parcel out among themselves the Holy Roman Empire. Disagreeing, they met later at Verdun, where a more pacific mood obtained, and to Charles was given France; to Louis, Germany; and to Lothair, the central territory, including the city of Rome and embracing what is now Alsace-Lorraine, the latter taking its name from Lothair.

14 THE SILVER ON THE IRON CROSS

In the Castor Church St. Bernard delivered his stirring appeals summoning the people to the second crusade. It was from Coblenz that a great army started back to France to restore Louis to power. Up the river a few miles is Konigstuhl, the stone where for centuries the German kings have been crowned. In front of the Castor Church is the monument the French erected more than a hundred years ago to commemorate their victory at Moscow, and bearing beneath the French inscription the laconic statement added by a Russian general after Napoleon's army had been destroyed by the snow and the cold in the march back to France: "Seen and approved by the Russian commander of the city of Coblenz." A doughboy had come along and scratched into the stone his "O. K." of both the French and the Russian inscriptions. On the river bank, hard by the Coblenz bridge, is a stone marking the spot where William the Great and Bismarck met in 1870 and celebrated that "triumph of diplomacy" which issued in the Franco-

INDIAN HEAD AT EHRENBREITSTEIN 15

Prussian war, and which these two shrewd plotters for power regarded as great because by it they persuaded the French that they had been insulted and the Germans that they had been insulted also, thus setting them at each other's throats.

As a fitting climax to the war landscape which lies in the vision of Ehrenbreitstein is the equestrian statue of William the Great. It is one of the largest in the world. It stands there on a point of land just beneath you where the Moselle and the Rhine meet, and is so distinctly to be seen that you can all but catch the expression in the old king's face. The bronze figure, planted on a great stone, is forty-six feet high. Some idea of its size may be had from the fact that the horse's hoof measures two and one-half feet across. Into the creation of this figure, that must have most pleasantly fed the vanity of kings, went one million nine hundred thousand marks. The statue bears the inscription, attributed to the man on the horse: "Never will the empire be destroyed if the people remain united and loyal."

But "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." The day for kings is dead, and the union based on power and camouflaged with a cry for loyalty has parted like a rope of sand.

One afternoon we climbed out of Coblenz up to the top of Ehrenbreitstein; out of Coblenz, now the headquarters of the American Army of Occupation; out of Coblenz, where a lad in the uniform of an American soldier was on guard before the entrance to the palace in which William the Second, Ludendorff and Hindenburg only a few months before had their headquarters and planned to make German "kultur" rule the world. We climbed the steep road which winds and winds. As we looked up we could see the faces of doughboys in the windows of the wall. Then we reached the great stone gate by which the fortress is entered, and there it was that we saw the sight which told the story of how, in a few short months, the world had changed, and the tides of power which had been running in the Rhine valley for two thousand years had reversed themselves and were setting toward freedom.

INDIAN HEAD AT EHRENBREITSTEIN 17

For there, over the gateway to the Gibraltar of the Rhine, we saw the Indian Head of the Second Division of the American Expeditionary Force. There on the arch, in big letters in the colours of our flag, the soldiers had painted "17th U. S. Field Artillery." And on the cap-stone, with his feathers as fierce as they could ever have been on the war trail in the wide wild forests of the West, was the bronzed face of the Red Man. It told the story of a world change, from autocracy to democracy, from arrogant privilege to the rights of the average man, from despotism to freedom, from lust for power to concern for human welfare, from medieval despotism to the civilization based on good-will.

I lifted my hat to the Red Man from the land of the free, and as I did so, I caught sight of "Old Glory" flying far above me, from the flagstaff at the very summit of Ehrenbreitstein; and I felt that the flag was flying there not to make Germany fear, but to make her hope. It was the sign and pledge that men shall be not slaves, but free.

18 THE SILVER ON THE IRON CROSS

They say that Ehrenbreitstein means "Honour's broad stone." With the stars and stripes of freedom flying from its summit, the great crag was at last worthy of its name.

II

THE TULIPS OF COUCY LE CHÂTEAU

IT was on a March day, with the chill of winter still in the air, that we came to Coucy le Château. For centuries the old town had proudly looked down from the high crest of the hill which lifts its steep sides sheer out of the surrounding plain. Around the escarpment of this hill ran the wall with its frowning towers and medieval fortifications. Inside this wall was the town with a peace time population of three thousand souls. Outside the walls were the bluffs of the hill, empty save for the winding road dug into the hillside and leading from the plain to the hill-crest. Coucy was one of those fortified towns, picturesque and historic, to be found here and there in France, standing as the survival of a day that was gone and suggestive of the struggles which for centuries had made the surrounding plain and that region one of the world's great

battle-fields. There was a time when Coucy was deemed impregnable, and no foe had much of a chance against its walls, broad and high, and its gates, strong and strategic.

The people, who dwelt behind the fortifications, felt no fear though "a host should encamp against them," for a handful of determined men could garrison the fortress against all attacks.

But things had changed. The big shells had hurtled around the heights and dropped hell into the homes of the people who for a long time had dwelt serenely in the old château town. Coucy was in the crater that for the four years of the world war had raged in the Soissons area; and on that bleak day in March, 1919, when we climbed the steep winding road of the fortress-crowned hill, all that was found at the summit was a deserted ruin. It would be difficult to picture desolation more complete. Not a house was left standing, not a piece of wall behind which a forlorn hope could rally and successfully counter. On every side gaunt ruins greeted you, doors that hung to nothing,

windows that were grinning apertures on chaos, piles of stone crushed and crumbling in disordered streets, and nowhere life. There was not enough left in the old town to feed a rat. And yet as we strolled through the deserted streets and climbed over the débris, there was enough left to suggest something of what the place had been. Yonder was a street that had been lined with shops, here was evidently the Hotel de Ville, there was a humble home of a peasant, and around the curved street the more pretentious residences of the bourgeois.

One found himself thinking of the people who had dwelt in Coucy before war had begun to rain destruction on the doomed town. Where were they now? How did they meet the terror when it came bursting in upon them? In their hurried flight how much of home were they able to carry away? Was hope dead in their breasts? Only four years ago the town was happy. Children played in the streets and the sound of laughter was heard. Women talked to each other from

22 THE SILVER ON THE IRON CROSS.

the windows and men exchanged the courtesies of the day as they met and mingled in their vocations. But now not a sound in the town but the whistle of the wind through the ruins; not a sight but that of the havoc made by war.

The village on the hill-crest was but one of many to suffer such a fate; and all such places in that devastated area, which was, before the war, one of the fairest stretches of France, indict war as man's supreme folly.

Will the race learn its lesson? Will men climb out of these ruins not with a gun in their hands and hate in their hearts, but chastened and purified, to seek the civilization that "cometh not with observation," and whose glory is good-will?

As I wandered amid the desolate ruins of Coucy le Château I climbed over a bit of broken wall, and found myself in what was evidently the little garden of one of the great homes of the old town. That any ground in such a limited area had been left for a garden was enough to arrest attention;

but there was the spot of cultivated earth, and the sight that greeted my eyes was an answer to some of the questions that had been perplexing me. For there in the little garden behind the broken wall, under the shadow of the ruined home, the tulips were blooming. It was a perfect bed of the gorgeous flowers. They had been planted in a circle, and the circle was complete and aflame with brilliant colour. War had not robbed them of their beauty. It had not halted nor lamed them as they marched out to meet the spring. They were in full bloom, red and white and yellow blossoms; and they seemed to say to the ruined town: "We have come to bid you hope. We would lay our cheeks against the shattered rocks and sing of a new day."

As I looked into the fresh faces of those blossoms which were flinging their challenge at war, and shouting their defiance of the forces that destroy, I said to myself: "Yes, the world will learn. It may come slowly, but it will come; for nature is God's method, and nature's way is not death, but life; not a

broken wall but a blooming flower; not frightful war but blessed peace."

Then I climbed up on the broken wall, and looking across the unsoiled and unafraid faces of the tulips of Coucy le Château, I seemed to see the ruined town rebuilding. The homes were coming back to the old fortress, and the people were thronging the deserted streets. Coucy was rebuilding, not as a medieval fortress, but as a community garrisoned with peace; for the flowers in the little garden were leading the way to spring. And then the town disappeared and the vision filled with a thousand towns, battered by the shells and scorched by the flames of war, to all of which the tulips seemed to be bringing the same message of triumphant hope.

The unconquerable forces of the world are the mightiest. The sun rises; but no eye sees the arm that sets it in its socket in the sky. The tide comes in; but no diagnosis of the senses can detect the power behind the waves which break on the beach. The flowers bloom; but who has found the

secret at the heart of a flower? The world dries its tears and finds that the morning has returned because the same power that makes the sun shine and the flowers bloom and the tides ebb and flow with life, is eternally pledged to happiness.

Coucy le Château will grow up out of the ruins, and scarred France will see her shell-torn fields in grass and grain again. As if to proclaim that the tulips on the hilltop were not blooming in vain, a little group of a dozen French peasants met us as we were passing out of the gate of Coucy. There was an aged man, some old women, some younger women and some children. They told us that their homes had been in the old town, and they had come back to see if they could find a place to live. They will find it, somehow they will accomplish the impossible, for there was a look in the eyes of the children, and even in the withered face of the old man, akin to the look in the faces of the tulips behind the broken wall—a look which says that life is stronger than death.

III

A SOLDIER'S GRAVE

“**W**E have come to help,” said an American general to the French on his arrival overseas; “and when we return we shall return empty-handed, save that we shall take back with us our dead.”

But even this has been denied us. We cannot take back our dead. Some there are whose bodies we cannot even find. They were part of that great line of courage and valour we flung against the Prussians at Château Thierry, at St. Mihiel, in the Argonne, and in other fights on the long front. They fought with such eagerness and abandon, with such disregard of personal safety, with such fierce daring and recklessness that

as the Hun looked on he said, "The game is lost."

Some of them were buried where they fell, in shallow graves, scooped out by the roadside to hold all that was mortal of a man. Sometimes the deadly shell had done its work so well, had so blown to pieces the lithe body of some sunny-faced American boy, that but the bleeding fragments could be interred; and sometimes only the smile with which he went into battle was left for memory to treasure. Even when the chaplain could recite the service and the body could be lowered by comrades to its final rest, conditions were such that "earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust," was a speedy process; and soon the bodies of the brave dissolved again into mother earth.

Hence, France must keep our dead. They have become a part of the land for which they fought, and these graves of our American dead in France will unite us forever.

It was one of these graves that I had set out to visit. He was as fine a lad as any American home had given to the service.

28 THE SILVER ON THE IRON CROSS

Before war was declared he was keensighted enough to see what was coming, and resigning his chair in a state university, he entered the army. In a letter written before his enlistment, he had told a close friend of his desire to devote his life to some cause that would serve human welfare, adding that if this meant service overseas he would gladly go, but would not expect to return. It was as if the hand of destiny had written so plainly that he could read his fate before he met it. He was a captain. I have thought that if there is one commission that carries with it a chance to be more than a part of a great military machine it is that of captain. He comes in close touch with his men. He can know them. If he has a heart, he can serve them. He can stand between them and injustice. He can summon them if he is white. He can tie them to him with bonds that are stronger than death; and he can lead them anywhere, if he is a man.

My soldier was a captain, and he was a man. On the battle front one day the shell that bore his name found him, and he died

where he fell. The news of his death was slow in reaching the loved ones at home, and came at first in a soldier's letter to a mutual friend in a distant city. We hoped against hope. It fell to my lot to carry to his mother the message from the War Department which told us that we must cease to hope. Her soldier boy was dead.

In the old church of which he was a member, we gathered on a Sunday afternoon for the memorial service. The captain's body was not there. How the heart reaches out for some physical contact in its hours of bereavement!

“ When death inexorable has bereft us,
When all we can is done, and all is said,
What other only comfort is there left us,
What solace save the caring for our dead? ”

But even this poor comfort was denied the broken heart. The grave was somewhere across the wide, wide sea, and empty arms stretched out in vain for love to fill.

There were flowers that had been brought to the church in his memory, but we could

30 THE SILVER ON THE IRON CROSS

not lay them on his grave. We could only send them, with a thought of him, to the sick in the hospital after our service was over. But it is still something to come before God with only the memory of "the touch of a vanished hand, and the sound of a voice that is still." Thus we came that day to the old church, and thus many similar groups have gathered when the message came that told of the supreme sacrifice.

As the bugler in the tower of the church sounded taps at the close of the service, we slowly passed out, but the distance to a soldier's grave in France seemed shorter, for He who watches between us and ours while we are absent one from another had comforted His people.

Is it strange that when I came to France, I wanted to visit a soldier's grave? It was not easy to find. General Records had no record; but Providence helped, and on the train I met an army officer who told me where to find the spot where the captain sleeps.

We drove for miles across the battle-fields

to reach the little American cemetery lying on the sunny summit of a hill, where four hundred and ten graves, each with a little cross and a metal plate to tell the story, make sacred for America the soil of France.

At the gate a flag of the homeland was flying, and just inside the gate at the third grave in the first row, I found him. It was a row of captains' graves. I paused at his number, 211, and read his name on the metal plate. Then before I knew it, a mist was swimming before my eyes; and I found myself saying over and over again, under my breath: "God bless the boy!"

Was it a prayer for the dead? No, I was not asking God to do something for the captain He had not already done. "Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord." He had died thus. When he fell, it was to find his Saviour's arms around him, for thus he had gone into battle. When we said good-bye before he sailed, I had pointed up and said: "Remember," and with a smile he had said to his pastor: "I will not forget." I was not afraid that he had forgotten. When the

32 THE SILVER ON THE IRON CROSS

heart leaped to the lip with "God bless the boy!" it was not a prayer but a benediction.

We covered the grave with spring flowers; and then the friends who had come with me gathered around the captain's grave, with uncovered heads, as I offered a prayer to the God of brave men.

Then under the open sky, on the hillside, beside a soldier's grave, we thanked God for him and for all like him who had laid down life or placed it in jeopardy for a holy cause. We commended to God anew His children back home to whom the bit of earth where we stood was consecrated ground. Quietly we turned away and went back by the battered towns, by the piles of ammunition along the roadside, by the war tanks stranded in the fields where the battle left them, back by the tools of war and the signs of the ruin it marks; but we went past all this feeling that the graves where sleep the bodies of our soldier dead are shrines. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." Some day a grateful country will build an

enduring memorial to her sons who fell in the world war; but already they are remembered, and they can never be forgotten.

“ What need have we for cenotaph or column,
For mural stone or window's blazoned flame,
When all our hearts are sanctuaries solemn,
Wherein we hold enshrined our hero's name? ”

IV

THE CAVE DWELLER OF JUVIGNY

“**T**HERE is no lock in France that a franc will not open.” This is the view some Americans are bringing home of our Ally across the sea. Many of our soldiers are unfortunately returning convinced that the French have disgracefully profited on America and Americans. They will tell you that the French shopkeepers have one price for the natives and a higher price for the same article when purchased by an American; that the French palm is always extended and when examined is found to be an itching palm; and that all barriers yield to a sufficiently substantial consideration. They point to the big sum the French Government has charged America for the use of its rails and for concessions incident to the handling of

troops and supplies. They will remind you that not even the body of an American soldier, slain in defense of France, can sleep in peace until the grave has been paid for in cold cash.

In the face of all this, the doughboy finds it hard to believe that France is a nation of idealists. He knows that America entered the war with altruistic motives; that she has spent billions of money, sent millions of men, and made preparations for war on such a colossal scale that even the unimaginative Hun was convinced the game was lost. All this America did, not for herself, but for a nation that was being pressed by her enemies to the danger line. America's motive was not lust for power or territory, but a desire to help the Allies in their struggle for freedom.

Under such circumstances, the doughboy feels that France should have given him chivalrous treatment, and the French people should have declined to line their purse at his expense. Is his estimate of France fair? Before allowing his judgment to

harden, there are some things to remember. It is perhaps unfortunate that the dough-boy's contact has been with a class of the French people in whom the habit of thrift is easily mistaken for greed. The French peasant hoards his small earnings. He has no desire to be rich, but he does cling to his small piece of ground, and looks and longs for the day when it may be rounded out. He is in no position to be generous, and if he should seem ungenerous or even profiteering, let his victim think of the generations of privation and struggle that lie behind this centime-serving peasant. One should also not forget that while France has profited on the American soldier, America did the same back home. Prices soared, hotel charges leaped up, room rents became exorbitant wherever a camp or cantonment was located in the States. If our own people went wrong, let us not be too hard on the French.

A soldier writing to his father about the way the people, among whom the troops lived, profited said:

“They fleece us pitilessly; the price of everything is exorbitant; in all the dealings that we have with them they treat us more like enemies than friends. Their cupidity is unequalled; money is their God; virtue, honour seem nothing to them compared to the precious metal. I do not mean that there are no estimable people whose character is equally noble and generous—there are many; but I speak of the nation in general.

“Money is the prime mover of all their actions; they think only of means to gain it; each is for himself, and none is for the public good.”

But this is not a letter from France in 1918, about the way the French treated their American allies. It was a letter from America in 1782, about the way the Americans treated their French allies.

That the French Government has been liberally paid for certain concessions is undoubtedly true; but we were able to pay and France needed the money. France's resources had been drained by the long war, and her treasury was in no condition to play up spectacular generosity. It would have been a sorry day for a rich nation like

38 THE SILVER ON THE IRON CROSS

America to have taxed her exhausted ally for entertainment. America had too much self-respect to let France pay her bills; too much chivalry herself to ride free trains to the battle front.

There is, however, something else to be remembered, whenever we are tempted to condemn the cupidity of the land of Lafayette. France has suffered. She has paid such a price for freedom as to shame and refute every charge against her honour. She heads the list in the percentage of enlistments and casualties; and it is across her bosom that war's red ruin has ploughed its deepest furrows.

It was in the little village of Juvigny that I saw the picture that stamped this on my imagination. Juvigny was one of those little towns in the war zone played upon alternately by the guns of both friend and foe. It had been shot to pieces, and was battered beyond recognition. I stopped one day to look at the ruins of Juvigny; but what I saw was not a town beaten down to its foundations, but a human being, battered

by adversity, creeping out of a hole in the side of the hill, stooped and wrinkled and feeble; carrying on her shoulders the burdens of years, and on her heart a weight of woe which words are too empty to express. Once she had lived in a stone house there on the hill; now she burrowed into a hole she had dug for herself in the side of that hill. This was her "house by the side of the road." It was near the spot she loved best, and she could at least be close to the ruins of her former home. She was not coming out of her cave in the bank by the roadside to beg, for her load was on her back as well as on her heart. She was coming out to work. Broken, bent, despoiled, harassed, her spirit was unconquerable. She could still carry on!

As she tottered with her bundle down the path to the place where she worked, I said: "There goes the soul of France-invincible." And when I have heard men say that France is mercenary, that her people are degenerate, I have thought of the cave dweller of Juvigny. People there are in France who

deserve all the resentment the American soldier has justly felt because of treatment not to be expected at the hands of those he came to help. But let the doughboy forget the shopkeepers of France and remember the soldiers; let him forget the itching palms and remember the faces seamed with sorrow; let him forget Paris and think of Juvigny; let him forget the courtesan, and think of an aged woman peering out of a doorway dug in the mud walls of a bank by the roadside. In her face was the look which kings have seen and have not slept.

V

THE BLACKSMITH OF POTHIERES

HE was a big six-footer from the Tennessee mountains, with a Southern drawl in his voice and a manner that was languid but not hesitant. He was putting new shoes on the hind end of an army mule. We were turning a corner into the narrow street on which the company's shop was located and where the big Tennessean was endeavouring to fit the mule for service in the "Democratic Army." Just as we turned the corner the oath slipped out, and the mule was described in language sufficiently picturesque to classify him. Hardly had the oath passed into history when the blacksmith saw his captain and the preacher who was holding forth nightly in "Wildcat Hut" turn the corner. Gently he dropped the mule's hind foot, quietly walked to the beast's head, and tak-

42 THE SILVER ON THE IRON CROSS

ing hold of one of his long ears, said in low tones which he did not expect us to hear, but which we were fortunate enough to catch: "If you don't behave yourself, you are going to make this preacher hear me cuss." Was he profane? Did the oath on his lips mean there was no respect for God in his heart? Did the fact that he softly swore at the mule mean that he lacked those finer traits of character which are supposed to be built on reverence?

Yes, there is much profanity in the army. You had best stay away if your ideas of propriety are too stiff to stand it. But is this profanity to be judged by the orthodox standard? There is good authority for the statement that "as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." Of course there must be no apology for the sin of taking God's name in vain. Profanity under no circumstances can ever be regarded as a harmless habit. Nevertheless a deed takes on character from its motive, and the profanity of the army should not be passed on apart from its environment.

The mule is there, and by the mule I mean conditions that are exasperating, that rasp the nerves and try the soul and vex the spirit. There must be a safety valve, and the one which many a soldier uses is located in his vocabulary. Often he feels as the old Roman who said: "If I can't bend the gods above, I'll rouse all hell below," and he proceeds to rouse. Before condemning the soldier too severely for his oaths, remember his provocations. They are many and bitter. And before them the old maid code of propriety goes to the bow-wows.

One night, in a sermon, I took the boys to task for their language, and the next morning they took me down to the corral where the mules were kept, and said: "Preacher, you don't understand what we are up against. These mules have been brought up on cussing. They don't understand any other language. We have to swear at them to get results. That mean looking mule yonder is 'Old Dynamite.' It takes an hour and a half every morn-

44 THE SILVER ON THE IRON CROSS

ing to get him hooked to the wagon. We have to fasten one end of a chain around his neck and throw the other end over the limb of a tree and hoist his front feet from the ground and leave him hanging there for three-quarters of an hour before he will let us come near him with the harness." I had to admit that "circumstances alter cases."

Frequently the army man looks upon profanity as a means to an end. One day a young sergeant, who had come to talk with me about the better things of life, who said that the war had strengthened his faith in Christ, and who declared that he was going back to America to work in the church more actively than he had done before, admitted that at times he used profane language. He did not try to excuse himself, and he stated most positively that when he returned home, he would leave the practice behind him. "But," he said, "I do not mean to be profane when I use such language in the army. It is merely in order to accomplish results."

He was probably wrong in his estimate of the value of profanity as a getter of results. Some of the most capable officers I have known have been outspoken in their declaration that it is not necessary to curse men in order to control them. The best comes out, not under the lash of an oath, but under the spell of an example. Then too, along with the breakdown of profanity as a result getter, one must reckon on the peril which comes from the tenacity of habit. An old soldier declined election to the office of elder in his church. To a friend, in private, he explained that while an army officer he had used profane language; and that although years had passed and he had long since reformed his speech, still in moments of severe provocation the old oaths would come leaping to his lips to shame and confound him.

The soldier who has become a swearing man will perhaps some day discern that trunk lines have been built in his nerves for such words, and that it is not always easy to throw the switch; but that the use of

46 THE SILVER ON THE IRON CROSS

such language is to be regarded as the sign of a bad heart does not always follow. His profanity is playing with fire, but it is not arson. Attention has been called to the fact that while profanity is so common among American soldiers, it is rarely heard among the French. What is the explanation? It can hardly be due to any greater reverence the Frenchmen entertain for religion. Indeed it may be suspected that the materialistic Frenchman has so utterly cast God out of his processes of thought that he does not even appeal to Him in a profane oath. Profanity is the débris of a religious nature. The profanity of the American soldier is no sign of a nature that repudiates religion. It is the flotsam and jetsam of a faith that has grown careless.

What is said of profanity must also be said of other things in the indictment against a soldier's morals. One must remember what these men have been up against. They have not been going to Sunday school. There in the trenches amid the mud and the dead, amid the shrieking shells and the

rattle of machine-gun fire, amid the awful carnage and sickening horrors of war, they have been in hell. Is it strange that they should come out with some of its filth upon them? But be patient and do not be too severe. Cheers for them, that they have done as well as they have!

A fine lad from the plains of North Dakota, who said he wanted to go home and run a farm for a living and help boys become good men for a life-work, said to me one day on the banks of the Rhine: "Is the man back home who swears one oath, and is kept from swearing more for fear of what people may think of him, any better than the man over here who swears all his oaths because he does not care what people may think of him?"

As I passed the blacksmith of Pothieres that morning I felt, notwithstanding his words to the mule, that I was in the presence of a man who had more real reverence for sacred things than many who bow in churches.

VI

HOLY COMMUNION IN WILDCAT HUT

IT was a muggy night outside, such as the climate of southern France produces in superabundance along toward the close of winter. The rain was falling, the streets were streams of sloppy mud, the night was dark, and the men were homesick.

They called themselves "the lost Division." They had trained at Camp Jackson, had come overseas the preceding August, and part of the Division had been lucky enough to get into action during the last days of the Argonne. There they had given a good account of themselves and shown that all they needed was a chance to prove that the wildcat on their left shoulders was not an empty decoration.

But the Eighty-First was settling into the stolid conviction that they had been for-

gotten. They were not on the list of the units named for return during the four ensuing months. They had heard that although they had been in France over six months and were wearing their first chevron of gold, a telegram had recently been sent from the War Department in Washington to their old training quarters at Camp Jackson ordering the Eighty-First to demobilize. Why should they not regard themselves as "the lost Division" ?

To seal their doom, a private had dreamed that one day, long after the war was ended, General Pershing, grown to be an old man, was sitting in his home in America, with his little granddaughter on his knee, who said, "Grandfather, where is the Eighty-First?" After some reflection, he replied, "Why, there was an Eighty-First, wasn't there? I must go back to France and see if I can find it." After wandering around France for some time, he finally came upon an aged man in frayed and ragged uniform. It proved to be General Bailey. The cat on his shoulder was worn almost beyond rec-

ognition. General Pershing asked him, "Where is the Eighty-First?" to which the old man shook his head and replied, "*Je ne comprends pas.*"

I had been speaking to the men of the 318th Field Artillery all week, and on the closing Sunday night of the meetings we had arranged for a communion service. The chaplain told me it had been a long time since they had been able to hold such a service. Indeed, many of the men had not partaken of the symbols of the Saviour's passion since leaving the home church in America.

The hut was a long, low, ugly building squatting on marshy ground. It had formerly been used for a mess hall, but had been moved and changed to adapt itself to the uses of a Y hut. In the corner of one end was the canteen, and across the other end was the platform on which "Y events" were staged. Two little stoves toiled to impart a suggestion of warmth to the French chill which is always in the air during the winters in France. When the Delco

system could get gas, the hut was lighted with a few feeble incandescent lamps. On the front, in red letters, hung the sign, "Wildcat Hut," and there, on that rainy night, we gathered for a soldiers' celebration of the death of Christ.

We had to content ourselves with the rudest furnishings for the Holy Supper. The communion table was a rough box in which canteen supplies had been shipped. The "service" consisted of a white porcelain plate and two glass tumblers. The wine was in the bottle in which it had been bought, and the bread was a loaf which I took to the canteen and, with my pocket knife, cut into small squares. All this was covered with a clean white towel.

The hut was packed with men, many of them, unable to get seats, standing in the far end from the platform. The Delco system began to fail, and as the meeting started, went out of business altogether. Then a few candles were placed on the window sills, and these served, not so much to light the room, as to cast shadows.

When I arose to speak, in the dimly lighted hall, I could see the outlines of the men in the rear of the room, but not their faces. I reminded them that the Holy Supper had first been observed at night; and that, while we met in an army hut with none of the grandeur of a great church around us, and that while our communion table was a rough box and our communion service cheap dishes borrowed from the "mess," we must not forget that the Saviour, Whose love we were to recall, was Himself born in a stable and cradled in a manger; and that the plain and cheap surroundings of our communion service there in Wildcat Hut might make all the more impressive the spiritual side of the sacrament. I expressed the hope that Christ would become so real to us in that service which was to be so empty of all external appeal, that in the days to come, as memory dwelt upon the night, it would stand out as a great hour in the life of the soul.

They sang "Rock of Ages." I thought of what those boys had been through, of

what they had given up, of the long days and weary weeks there in the mud of France, of how heart-sick they were for the homes overseas, of how more than seventy thousand of their comrades were sleeping the long sleep in the little graves under the wooden crosses scattered throughout the devastated area. Then, as I heard them sing,

“E’en though it be a cross
That raiseth me,”

it seemed to me that I saw the light of a new glory in some of their faces. I don’t suppose they were thinking of their hardships. I like to feel they were thinking of His cross. And it may have been only my imagination, but there was something in the hut that night that helped one to see the unseen. God seemed not far away. The eternal was casting its spell upon us.

The message was on “Being Crucified with Christ,” and the Scripture, Galatians 2:20.

After the address, the men were asked to

come forward and line up in front of the platform to receive the emblems. From here and there and yonder, in the dimly lit room, they arose and quietly came forward, taking their places in a formation that meant loyalty to Christ.

It was a heroic test to commune under such circumstances. It must be done before men who hate hypocrisy as they hate nothing else, as well as before the God Whose eye seeth the heart.

Then, as I walked down the line, uttering the old words of the institution and giving to each man the emblems of his Saviour's passion, the mean surroundings and cheap furnishings of Wildcat Hut seemed transfigured. No stately cathedral was more glorious than the place, for He Whose face is heaven had come to His soldiers, far from home and loved ones, and made them feel the nearness of those who are one in Him.

Many have been the times I have ministered at the Table, but that night, when those soldiers of our country stood with bowed heads in Wildcat Hut and remem-

bered Him Who died on the cross for them, can never be forgotten, for there in the line among those who took the emblems of Christ's passion from my hand was my own son.

VII

A COMMISSION INSTEAD OF THE GUARD HOUSE

HE was a Second Lieutenant. We had met that morning for the first time, and we may never meet again. It was on a railroad train making its poky schedule through the devastated area of France. He wanted some one to talk to, and when there is nothing better available, a preacher who listens sympathetically easily finds what beats beneath a soldier's jacket.

And so he told me about his sweetheart back in the States. He was dead anxious to get home, and soon after his arrival there would be a wedding, and then Eden would start all over again. As he talked about her, I could see how that girl had followed him

overseas, how her face had floated before him in the long days and lonely nights, how her voice had called to him when the way was rough and the world was hard, and how the thought of her had been his shield and buckler in the struggle with temptation.

“Has not the thought of that girl back home, who has promised to be your wife, helped you to play the man over here?” I said. “She has,” he quickly and eagerly answered. “She has given me a commission instead of the guard house.”

There, in a word, he had painted the picture of the influence of the women back home on our men in this war. There has been no sweeter, holier, diviner influence. It has been God's good hand to keep them from evil and save them from despair.

One night, at the close of a meeting in a hut that had been an old wine house, a big, broad-shouldered chap elbowed his way through the crowd up to the front, to shake hands and tell me he was from the South. As we stood talking of the state we both love, he said, “I have a wife over there,

and a little baby I have never seen.” “Well, Captain,” I said, “when you have been tempted over here, has the thought of the wife and the baby over there steadied you?” “It has saved me,” he replied, as he gripped my hand good-bye.

So one might pass down the line and find the same story repeating itself over and over again. There is no diviner influence than that of a good woman, and there is no more satanic influence than that of a bad woman. The American soldier has felt both.

He has had to face the courtesan-life of France and face it under circumstances which made victory over lust the achievement of a superman. He has found the door not only open but the invitation insistent to break away from moral restraints. He has been plunged into an atmosphere saturated with indulgence. He has been thrown into an environment which made desire the only ethical criterion of conduct. He has come out of the trenches, in some cases, to find that the authorities supposed

to protect him against sexual indulgence had made provision for its gratification. Is it any wonder that some fell? Is it not a miracle that any stood? Yet many, probably the majority, did stand, and the explanation of the miracle was the influence of a pure woman back home. It may have been his mother, it may have been his wife or his sister, it may have been his sweetheart; but she was for him the incarnation of all that is finest in life; and when the devil of temptation showed his leering face, instead of yielding, the soldier smote him full.

The women in America have played a great part in the winning of the war. They have nursed patriotism in the souls of the men at home. They have sent the boys away to the war, smiling as they kissed them good-bye; and then they have gone home to cry in the night when none but God could see their tears. They have been at the front in every great undertaking at home for the winning of the war. They have worked and prayed, and hid their

heartaches and kept on smiling; but they have done more than this. They have been perhaps the most potent force in maintaining the morale of the army. They have stretched unseen hands across the wide sea and, with the resistless might of their unconscious influence over American manhood, they have smitten the Hun. They were there in the courage of every soldier who thought of his sweetheart and carried on; of every son of a good mother who said to himself as he went over the top, "I know she is thinking about me."

"I have been true to my wife all the while I have been over here," said a soldier as he passed by in the line of men with whom I was shaking hands. The light of heaven was in his face when he said it, and a look which told of battle and of victory too.

The American woman makes a fatal blunder who suffers her ideals to sag, as the boys come home; who imagines that the way to please the man who has been in France is to do as the French do. The

American soldier may tolerate cigarette smoking in a Mademoiselle, but he looks for something different in the girl back home. He has seen the world and he returns to America with a discovery. The thing he used to take as a matter of course and, sometimes, because of its strictness, resent, he now adores. He returns with an enthusiasm for the purity of American womanhood, and the sanctity of American family life. Woe to the woman who thinks to win him by cheapening herself.

Half an hour ago I paused on the deck of the transport that was taking us back to America to listen to a group of these soldiers singing. They were a bunch of husky chaps, bronzed and hardened, smiling and happy. They had seen service, for they belonged to the Rainbow Division. I sat down beside them, and took from their lips the song. Here it is:—

“ I want a girl just like the girl
That married dear old Dad ;
She was a pearl, and the only girl,
That Daddy ever had ;

62 THE SILVER ON THE IRON CROSS

Dear old-fashioned girl, with heart so true,
One who loved no other one but you;
I want a girl just like the girl
That married dear old Dad."

America has things to learn, and she is learning them; but the American woman has no need to go to school to the small vices of the Continent. Society is largely what women make it. What a man thinks of a woman is largely responsible for his conduct, and if womanhood sags, the world is lost.

The soldier does not come home to ask the women of his country to efface themselves. He is willing for them to have their rights, and proud of their leadership; but he will be grievously disappointed should they cease to inspire him. He will look to a woman for his ideals, and if she has fallen below him, she will find that her power is gone.

How our boys have worshipped at the shrine of their loves during the dragging months of the war! It was about the only clean thing left them. They have marched

in the rain and the cold; they have slept in the mud and lived with the dead; they have gone without food and pay; they have been through hell; but something holy has gone all the way with them. It has been the thought of a woman they loved. In the darkness, her face has floated out before them. In the silence of the night, they have talked to her, and in their seasons of homesickness, the keenest longing has been to see her once more face to face.

The long months and dreary days of the war and the more trying period of enforced inaction and dead monotony following the signing of the armistice, these men endured. They endured it because they felt that it must end. Ever and again they found themselves saying, "What of the night?" They cursed the long night; but something said, "The morning cometh," and the morning for which they longed and waited was the daybreak of the homeland. In their picture of dawn was ever the face of the woman who was waiting. "She has given me a commission instead of the guard house."

64 THE SILVER ON THE IRON CROSS

Let her see to it there is no disappointment
when the boy comes home.

“ When the great red dawn is shining,
And the waiting hours are passed ;
When the tears of night are ended,
And I see the day at last ;
I will come down a road of sunshine,
To a heart that is fond and true ;
When the great red dawn is shining,
Back to home, back to love, back to you ! ”

VIII

GREEN APPLES AND ARMY CHOW

THEY were two doughboys at Montabaur, the headquarters of the First Division in the Army of Occupation, east of the Rhine. They were discussing the two permanent and continuous themes of conversation in the army—chow and getting home. They were walking just ahead of me and this is what I heard: “I guess we’ll get home in time to sleep on the grass and eat green apples,” said one; to which his comrade replied: “Take it from me, you had better let green apples alone, unless you want war in your stomach.” “Go ’way,” replied the first. “Any stomach that can stand this army chow won’t have any trouble with green apples!”

Thus did the doughboy carry on. He

says they call him "doughboy" because he is "the flour of the army." We have come to apply the name not only to the Infantry, but, as a general term, to designate the American soldier; and the army made up of these men is the flower of all the armies of the world.

The doughboy is a good sport. He lights up the rough stretches of his army life with a kind of grim but genial humour. He can make a joke of anything, even of death itself. He goes over the top with a smile, and he shouts his defiance at the shrieking shells which hurtle through the sky, even though it may mean the final gasp for him. "Go it, old piano box!" "Hurry up, old trolley car!" "Good-morning, Mister Whiz Bang!"

The most solemn things have their humorous side for him. "There is a man in this army to whom I owe ten dollars, and he has not been killed yet," said a doughboy in tones of deep disgust.

"When one of those big fellows falls near you and you fail to fall with it, your folks

might as well get ready to collect the insurance," said another.

A soldier, who sat down to rest his weary feet on the steps of the statue of William the Great at Coblenz, looked up and shook his fist at the old man on horseback, saying, "Damn you! You are the fellow who raised his son to be a soldier."

A doughboy, who said he had gotten some real American ice-cream in Paris, was asked how much it cost him, and laconically replied, "I almost got some for two francs." An indignant and disgusted buck private declared that "the Germans must have been fighting for power, certainly not for those French hills, which, so far as he was concerned, they might have if they would let him leave them."

There was a period when conditions in the camp at St. Aignan were very bad, in fact execrable; but the doughboy whistled down the wind, swallowed his discomforts, and took out his grouch against the place by calling St. Aignan "Camp Agony."

It is when he dwells on what he will do

when at last he is home again and free from army servitude that the doughboy's sense of humour gets most active. One man said that when he got home he was going to hang his blue denim suit on the wall and write under it, "Lest we forget."

Another said that the only part of his army equipment he wanted to take home with him was his dog tent; and when asked what he proposed to do with it, said, "I want to set it up in the kitchen. After breakfast, I want to crawl under it and go to sleep, and the same thing after dinner and supper. After I have done this for six weeks, my wife may give her orders and I'll be ready for anything."

They say, "the French fought for home, the English for glory, and the Americans for souvenirs." In line with this one soldier said, "The only souvenirs I intend taking home are a can of 'bully beef' and a package of 'hard tack.' I expect to set them up in front of me and say, 'Bully Beef, attention! Hard Tack, mark time!—and watch me eat roast chicken!'"

Their imaginations perform prodigiously as they picture the meals they expect to have prepared at home as a substitute for the hated army chow. "Boys, think of eating pumpkin pie until it stops tasting good." "I am going to order a beefsteak a foot and a half long and two inches thick and have it served with mushrooms."

They made many jokes about that pest of the trenches, the "cootie." In one unit, an order of knighthood was instituted with a cootie on the coat of arms, and above it, the legend, "Cootie Mit Uns," in emulation of the Kaiser. In another the Cootie Derby was run, under strict rules, jack-straws of the same length being the race-course, and only home-grown cooties being allowed to enter.

With such gentle humour did our brave boys try to light up a hard lot during those long months overseas. Even in the trenches and the hospital this spirit did not desert them. A good meaning woman, who said that she wanted to brighten up things for the sick soldiers, stopped beside a cot and

said to the doughboy, "Would you like me to wash your face?" "Yes," he said, "if you want to. It has been washed six times already this morning."

This front of cheerfulness, this tendency to make light of the rough side of army life, takes on a quality of heroism when one keeps in mind what these men went through. No brush can paint the picture; no words can adequately tell the story.

The things he had to stand, outside the combat activities, were trying enough. He was always standing something, somewhere. He got nothing without standing in line. It was everlastingly a line up. There he stood, shifting first from one foot to the other, slowly moving up, patiently waiting his turn, cheerfully biding his time to get a chance to buy a package of cigarettes or a box of chocolates, or receive his army chow. Some one has said that the favourite formation of the American Army is the chow line.

Then there were the many things which

are incident to existence when a man loses his personality and becomes part of a great military machine. Men used to command at home must take their detail at the most menial duties. It was most democratic, to be sure, but it took big men to take such things with serenity. When the fighting days came, how the glory of these sunny souled boys from the New World of the West shone out!

In one unit of two hundred and forty-eight, there were three hundred and sixty-three killed, so rapidly were replacements made into casualties. Lieutenant K., of the 18th Infantry, decorated with the Distinguished Service Cross, told me that in the fighting in the Argonne, he had seen men who had lain wounded for five days on the battle-field, before food and attention reached them. The chaplain of the 26th Regiment told me that their men went four days on one meal in the fighting at Soissons. At times men marched with their feet on the ground, slept in the mud and rain, faced and endured hardships that need not be

recited here, and still were able to jolly each other and make jokes about the situation.

This does not mean that they were contented with their lot—far from it. The doughboy is a knocker, and he is lonesome without his grouch. His grouch, however, is just a sign that he is healthy. Had he ceased to complain of conditions, there would have been good ground for alarm lest either his morale or his health was breaking down.

He is a great performer as a critic, and the things he needs most and likes best are the victims of some of his most vicious criticisms. The favourite marks for his shafts are the Second Lieutenants, the Military Police, and the Y. M. C. A. The stalest joke in the army is: "Who won the war?"—the answer to which is, "The M. P. and the Y." One cannot attend an army show without hearing some sally at this trinity of heroes in the doughboy's joking repertory. He will ridicule the Y and then he will use it. He will crowd its huts to overflowing.

He will throw down his pack and his first remark will be, "Where is that damn Y?" There can be no doubt that the Y frequently deserved the lashing it received at the hands of the men it was endeavouring to serve, for it was not always able to do for them what they needed and it had planned. It received only forty per cent. of its supplies, and it had only thirty per cent. of its transportation; but even thus handicapped, it did sixty per cent. of its job.

When the perspective has adjusted itself, and the doughboy tries to give credit where it is due, he will have only unstinted praise for an organization that was serving him with sixty-five hundred secretaries in France when the armistice was signed; that maintained fifteen hundred and seven centres in the A. E. F. and thirteen hundred and fifty in the French army; that had seven hundred and ten secretaries in the combat area in the Argonne drive, sixty-five of whom were women and more than five hundred of whom were under continuous shell fire; twelve of whose secretaries were killed,

74 THE SILVER ON THE IRON CROSS

ninety-seven gassed or wounded, and one hundred and twenty decorated, cited, or honourably mentioned.

Neither is the joking tendency of the doughboy the indication of a lamb-like nature. He is anything but docile in battle. I have been told that there is no more brutal fighter than he when he gets into the game. He is merciless and uses cold steel with an abandon that speedily made him a terror to the Hun. But he does not carry his savage mood away with him from the battle-field. You will never find him committing wanton atrocities on helpless women and children, or roughly trampling on the rights of civilians. The German women were amazed that soldiers who were so fierce in the trenches could be so gentle in the billets. They knew what their own men had done to the women of Belgium and France, and at first they looked for reprisals on the part of the soldiers in the Army of Occupation. They feared for their daughters and tried to shield them. They soon discovered that their fears were groundless, and when they

asked for an explanation of the courteous attitude of the doughboy towards the women of a conquered nation, they were told that the mothers of America did not bring up their sons to wage war on women.

The doughboy is not a vandal even when it comes to property. When some one argued that certain acts of salvage for the sake of souvenirs were justifiable because of what the Kaiser had done, one of these doughboys protested, saying, "It is not for us to become like him."

Neither are we to conclude that the light moods of our soldier boys mean that they lack depth. They have their serious hours also, and often the smile and the tear touch each other.

"I wish you'd drop around to see Mother once in a while," wrote a soldier to his pal. "She writes fine, smiling letters, but somehow I have a feeling that she is hiding a lot of tears. Tell her I'm all right, and *make her believe it.*"

Another, seriously wounded, said, "I've been a sort of wanderer for the last six

years. I guess the folks thought that I was good for nothing. But now I wish you would write Mother for me and just tell her that I made good."

Yet these same men made a joke of danger. In an air raid on Nancy, October 31, 1918, sixty bombs were dropped on the town in an hour and ten minutes. Searchlights began to play and air guns covered the city from all sides. Many buildings were struck and the next day the Red Cross cared for one hundred and twenty wounded. Instead of seeking cover, the doughboys rushed to the public square to enjoy the fireworks.

One who was in the Château Thierry drive says that he saw eighteen hundred of our men lying dead on that field, and every man had a smile on his face.

What is all this but saying that the American soldier is the finest ever? You cannot beat him. Take him all in all, he ranks the men in any age who have jeopardized life for a noble cause. He has brought the flag back home with an added glory. There is

an added glory in the red of the flag because of the blood our soldiers have spilled on the field of battle; there is an added glory in the white of the flag because of the white motive which has animated them in the war; there is an added glory in the blue of the flag because they have made every march and fight an affair of honour; and there is an added glory in the stars of the flag because of the stars which have changed from blue to gold as they have carried "Old Glory" through the smoke of battle to victory.

They deserve the best. The nation to whose call they rallied, and whose traditions they have honoured and enriched, cannot do too much for them, cannot expect too much of them. In the new day that is dawning for America and mankind, they will be found to respond to the call of duty with the same alacrity, to face the trying and difficult with the same serenity, and to achieve their objective with the same reckless disregard of self. They are not supermen, they are just men, but they are *men!*

IX

A TESTAMENT OR A BOTTLE OF WINE

WITH a bundle under my arm containing two dozen Testaments, I was on my way to the "Uncle Sam Theatre," where I was preaching every night to the soldiers. Two doughboys stopped me and one asked, "What is in that bundle—cigarettes?" "No," I said, "Testaments. Would you like one?" "Testaments!" he exclaimed, as a puzzled look came into his face. "No, thank you; but if you have a bottle of wine, I'll take that." On reaching the waiting room, behind the stage, at the theatre, I related the incident to a dozen soldiers who were leading the singing at our meetings. "Well," said one of them, "he was at least no hypocrite."

He named one of the cardinal characteristics of the doughboy's creed. He will not stand for camouflage when it comes to religion. It must be the real thing or nothing.

ing. He detests deceit, and scorns insincerity.

A show followed our meeting one night, in which two ladies with a blazing colour in their cheeks, artificially achieved, were the chief performers. "How did you enjoy the show?" I said to the soldier who was driving our car. "I did not go in," he rather curtly replied. "I don't care for a woman who is camouflaged."

There has been considerable speculation as to what effect the war has had on the soldier in his attitude to religion. As I went through the camps, one duty assigned me was the holding of informal conferences with different groups of soldiers to ascertain what they were thinking about Christian experience, the organized church, the message of Christianity, and the duty of the church to society in its economic, industrial, and political aspects. These conferences, while they revealed a wide diversity of views, disclosed a remarkable unanimity on the main issues involved.

They showed that the men back home,

who had been telling us that the soldier was coming back to smash the church and repudiate religion, had not sensed the situation. Indeed these conferences indicated that the doughboy has no iconoclastic intentions concerning the church. He wishes no radical changes. He will have no patience with sectarianism and intolerance; but the church he wants to find when he gets home is the old home church, with the hymns he used to sing, and the faces of the home-folks around him, and the God he has not forgotten still filling the place with the glory of His presence.

There was much in these conferences to indicate that the doughboy is returning from the war more religious than he went. In his conduct he has often been less moral; but in his convictions and conscious need he is more religious. This seems contradictory, but is not. Many a soldier who thought he was a Christian found in the army that he was mistaken, that his religion was only a conventional veneer. But many have found Christ in the army, and many,

many more have discovered that their faith has not only stood the stern test, but has come out of the struggle stronger.

War brings out the best and the worst. If a man is yellow, the army soon shows him yellow; and if he is white, it shows him white. If his religion has been a cult, it speedily goes to the devil, but if his experience of God has been vital, the war challenge proves that the "trial of faith" is still precious.

"Has your religion stood the test?" I said to a fine young marine from my own congregation. He had been in all the fighting where the famous Sixth Regiment had fought. "Yes, it has grown stronger," he said. "When we went into the fight at Château Thierry, I found myself on my knees. God came to me then, and He has never left me."

"Going over the top brought me to Christ," said another.

Numbers of these men, under the most trying conditions, have not faltered in their devotion to Christ. In the army, they have

shown what it means to be a Christian man. And they were not namby-pamby soldiers either. The best fighters in our army, they say, were not the loud talkers and bar-room brawlers, but what we call at home "the Sunday-school boys," fellows who shrank from killing a chicken, but who cleaned up Fritz in a jiffy.

One night in Le Mans in a hut crowded with standing soldiers, I listened to a talk from the Division General. It was one of the most famous combat divisions in the army, having gone in with the British first, and fought through. The General said to his men: "Our division has done so well because it is largely composed of Christian men."

One of the most stirring stories of personal exploit in the war is that of York, a tall, red-headed East Tennessee mountaineer, who, single-handed, took one hundred and thirty-one Prussian prisoners and marched them back of the lines, leaving twenty-five men dead on the field whom he had killed with his automatic. He was a

man who at first had been unwilling to enlist because he had conscientious scruples against killing people, but he prayed the thing through. The General who cited York for his almost miraculous achievement asked him how he did it. "I did not do it, General," he replied. "It was God Who did it."

At Chaumont de Bois I found a Bible class composed of soldiers that met every night after mess. They were studying the New Testament, with Captain J. as their leader. Beginning with St. Matthew's Gospel, they had reached the concluding chapter of the Epistle to the Romans on the evening I met with them.

The soldier is not pious but he is religious. Two of them had been arguing about belief in Jesus Christ. The argument closed with this emphatic statement made by one of them: "Any man is a damn fool who does not believe in Jesus Christ."

In a certain hut the men were asked whether they wanted "movies" or to hear about Jesus Christ. One of them cried out,

“To hell with the movies! Give us Jesus Christ.” Night after night I have seen these men pack the huts, often more than a hundred of them standing throughout the entire service, drawn there to hear the Gospel preached. I have seen them break into applause at the close of a simple Gospel sermon.

“It was just what I needed,” said a soldier as he shook hands with me one morning at the close of a communion service. The highest courage on the battle-field was not produced by alcohol, but by the quiet faith of men who believed in the reality of God’s presence.

And the profanity and sometimes immorality of these men was not always to be taken as an evidence that they were indifferent to religion. The doughboy’s religion is sincere and practical. The preacher who becomes metaphysical or theological will see the boys walk out, and they will not stand on the order of their going. His religion is also heroic, and it is preëminently altruistic. He is heroic as a matter of

course. Some one told me of a sergeant he found sitting out in "No Man's Land." His leg had been shot off and he was philosophically tearing up his shirt and tying up his wounds to keep from bleeding to death. His heroism is also altruistic. If there is one thing in religion the doughboy accepts, it is the doctrine of sacrifice and service. He scorns "the guy" who tries to better his own lot to the disadvantage of a comrade; and he takes it as a matter of course to lend a hand. A Y man told me of a soldier he saw whose eyeball had been shot out and was hanging on his cheek. Coolly he lighted a cigarette and began smoking. Seeing a wounded Boche prisoner lying near, he reached down and lighted the Hun's cigarette from his own.

These are the men who have fought for us and we may rest easy that the sanctities of life are safe with them. Religion is not likely to be hurt by these gentle, brave spirits who have fought the most unselfish crusade for which men have ever adventured life. Womanhood, childhood, family life, home,

the church, the Bible, all that faith cherishes—is safe with them.

A Y girl told me of how she had spent a lonely night in a box car by the roadside. She had served two thousand cups of chocolate that day in the front trenches. She had been caught in a barrage fire and the car in which she came having been deserted by its driver, she had to walk back alone. She came upon a group of dough-boys and they found a box car. The boys slept on one side of the car and she on the other, and she slept without fear.

They may not always be conventional in their attitude to religion. They may ask for a bottle of wine when you offer them a Testament; but they are not hypocrites. They are free of the sin Christ hit hardest when He was here on earth. They are sincere, and they have practiced the creed which teaches that “as Christ laid down His life for us, so ought we to lay down our lives for the brethren.”

The church has nothing to fear but everything to hope from such men. “And that

he liked best of all," as Mary Carolyn Davies says, "the feeling that one was part, at last, after one's puny life, of something vast."

One day in the hospital at Le Mans, I sat beside a soldier who in a few days was to answer the final roll call. "Is Christ with you?" I asked. "How can He be with me, when I have not been with Him?" Then he added, "But when I get home, I am going to seek Him." I told him he need not wait, but that He Who "stands at the door and knocks" was seeking him. Before I left him he had found Christ and peace.

Then another day, on the slope of a hill just outside Ancy le Franc, I stood by the grave and conducted the service, as the soldiers lowered to its final rest the body of a dead comrade. I knew little of the lad's life, but he was one of our boys, and, as taps were sounded and the soldiers down the hillside and along the white road stood at attention, I felt the lad must have met Him Whom soldiers are not less brave for worshipping as "the Captain of their Salvation."

X

INTERNATIONALISM AT NEVERS

IT was a sunny Sunday afternoon in sunny France, a combination not always easy of achievement. A Y hut was to be dedicated and the affair, as you will soon see, was to be international in character and, let us hope, also in results.

It was at Nevers, where six hundred Russian soldiers were on duty under the French military authorities. These were not prisoners but heroes of war. They belonged to that contingent of the Russian army which, in the early period of the war, came by the North Sea to fight on the West Front. They were as stalwart looking as any soldiers that muster under any flag. They had given a good account of themselves, and a number of them were decorated with the Russian cross or medal of

honour, some with both; and some with the Croix de Guerre.

Under the leadership of Dr. S., the Y. M. C. A. director of religious work in the area, and with the consent of the French officials, a Y work had been undertaken for these Russian soldiers. They had shown such keen appreciation of the work, which developed rapidly, that a large hall had been secured and furnished in connection with the barracks, and this hall, on this sunny Sunday afternoon, was to be formally dedicated.

A committee of soldiers, under the lead of the secretary, Private A., came to escort us to the hall. They were handsome in Russian uniforms, and their decorations glistened and shone in the sunlight.

The six hundred were Greek Catholics, Roman Catholics, and Jews; and Private A. was a Russian Jew who, during twelve years' residence on the East Side in New York City, had absorbed Americanism. He had been detailed from the army for this work. Speaking half a dozen languages, keen,

patriotic, and tolerant, he was admirably fitted for his difficult position.

On reaching the building, the first function was one of photography. The men poured out of their barracks, the cameras were snapped, and then the order was given to proceed to the hall.

Picture a hall packed with standing men on whose faces one, with only a little imagination, might read the tragedies and hopes, the struggles and defeats of a nation that still is in the womb of time.

On the platform were the French commanding officer, Lieutenant G.; two Russian officers, Colonel J. and Captain D.; and the speakers. It was France, Russia, and America,—three countries with an undying passion for freedom.

Russian hymns were sung—weird, full of melody and feeling. We Americans could not understand the words, but we could feel the accents of the heart as the songs broke on the lips of these sons of Russia far from the land which they still called home. As we listened, it seemed to us that the hymns

breathed pathos and hope, longing and daring. We felt that a country which could produce such melodies must some day leave discord behind it.

The French official welcomed us. Dr. S. responded, and then the two ministers from America, Dr. McA. and the writer, were introduced. We were interpreted by Private A. We tried to carry to that group of Russian soldiers the greetings of the great Republic of the West. We told them that America and Russia were both great in territory, in population and in a passion for freedom; that freedom in America was not equality but fraternity, not equality of position or possession, but of opportunity; not freedom to tear down but to build up; not freedom to hurt but to help. We described to them the things on which American democracy was founded, the home, the school, the state, and the church. We tried to make them understand how America is a nation with an international heart-beat by reason of the very life of her citizens, drawn as they are from every nationality;

of how America reaches over into France and puts a little of France into her blood, and then into Great Britain and puts a little of the Briton into her blood, and then into Scandinavia and Germany and the Orient, and dissolves all these in the making of an American citizen, until the beat of the race-kin becomes so strong that he must push his boat out of provincial waters and sail world seas with a concern for humanity. We told them that America had not lost faith in Russia, and that our people were stretching hands across the seas to strike hands with Russia in the effort to achieve this kind of freedom, not only for Russia, but for all mankind. They not only cheered to the echo what we said, but their hearts flamed in their faces with a look that had the night in it but also the morning.

Then something took place which is not on the conventional dedication program in Y huts. It was, I suppose, Russian, although it may have been also international. At the request of the Russian colonel, two of the soldiers came forward, a space was

cleared, a violinist began to play a Russian air, and an exhibition of Russian dancing was given that would have made Pavlowa jealous.

The staid Presbyterian ministers from America looked on, but somehow we could not rally enough of our traditions to feel shocked, and, when the dance ended, we caught ourselves among the most vociferous applauders for an encore.

It was at the close of the dancing that the French officer arose and gave the final touch which sent the good-will of the crowd to fever heat.

It seemed that Russian soldiers, like their French and American comrades, sometimes do things which land them in the guard house. It was so at Nevers, and a number of the men had been kept from the meeting because they were languishing in durance vile.

The French officer said that as an expression of his appreciation of what the Y was doing, he would pardon all offenders and empty the guard house. Then the

94 THE SILVER ON THE IRON CROSS

shouts cracked the roof. Calling for pen and paper, the French officer wrote the order, and a sergeant was hurried from the hall to execute it, in time for the discharged prisoners to partake of the chocolate and sandwiches served at the close of the meeting.

The men in that hall that evening will not return to Russia as a peril either to France or America. They will not go back with hate in their breasts, to pillage and burn. They will not turn to arson and murder for a method of civilization. When they go, every man will go as an ambassador of good-will to tell Russia that the freedom she must have is not license but liberty, not the freedom of lust but of love, not the freedom that destroys but builds.

The Russian problem—how is it to be solved? Statesmen are pestered and soldiers are perplexed. May not the evangelists of love have a solution?

“Fold the banners,
Smelt the guns;
Love rules,
Her gentle purpose runs.”

There are eight hundred thousand Russian prisoners released by Germany for reconstruction work in France. Would it help to spread the incident at Nevers and do for the eight hundred thousand what is being done for the six hundred? Suppose these Russians, during their sojourn in France, could be given some adequate idea of what American freedom is, and of the things on which American democracy is founded, would they not likely become the harbingers of a new day for their troubled fatherland? It would be something to send an army of two million American soldiers into Russia to see what force can do in bringing order out of chaos—but a cross still lifts on the world's far horizon, and, from the life of One Who died to make men free, the watchers for the dawn may hear: "A new commandment give I unto you, That ye love one another."

XI

THE HOUSE OF PEACE IN THE CRATER OF WAR

TWO things took me to Verdun,—a grave and a church; a grave that spoke of death and a church that speaks of immortality. It was hard to take our eyes off the ghastly ruins of the old town long enough to look for anything. There at Verdun, the Hun did his worst and the French their best. Nine hundred thousand men lost by the Germans and seven hundred thousand by the French, tell the tale of the great war's greatest battle. Had Verdun fallen, it would have signalled to the world that Germany had won the war. But Verdun stood. Only two of her thirty-six forts, Douaumont and Vaux, were occupied by the foe. But the destruction wrought baffles description.

We started out to look for the little Reformed Church in the shell-shot city. The men of my own congregation back in the States had become interested in it and were proposing to contribute a fund for its restoration and maintenance. I wanted to visit our parish overseas and tell the men back home something about their work in Verdun.

We passed the great Cathedral, whose gaunt walls were a grim skeleton of ruins, and whose tottering towers were marked with danger signs and forbidden the visitor. We went through street after street of ruined homes. It seemed as if there was scarcely a house in Verdun that had not been smashed by the almost ceaseless cannonading of four years.

At last we found our little church, standing on the Rue de Rivière. On either side of it the houses had been knocked to pieces, but the church was standing almost unharmed. A shell had made a hole in the roof, and we were told that the organ inside was badly damaged; but the church itself

stood, as though some invisible garrison had guarded it from harm.

Over the entrance, the image of the open Bible was carved into the stone. The place where the Book lay open was marked by a palm branch, the Bible's symbol of peace. On one page of the open book was the Greek letter Alpha and on the other page Omega.

Beneath the Bible, on the stone arch, was "*J. C., Le Chemin, La Verite, La Vie,*"—"Jesus Christ, the Way, the Truth, the Life." Then across the door itself, in gilt letters, was this marvellous message to be still standing on the door of a house in that shell-shot town: "*La Paix Soit Avec Vous.*" I read it and looked around upon the ruins—"Peace be with you!"

How it seemed to sing and shout itself out from the door of that little Reformed Church! How it seemed to shout its defiance at the bursting shells and fling its challenge in the face of all that dreadful war had tried to do in that crater of flame and death! How it seemed to float like a bene-

diction over the troubled, stricken city, and bid the poor souls left creep out from behind those piles of crumbling stones and hope and look for a better day!

“Peace be with you!” All the shells of the great armies of the Crown Prince had not been able to shoot it from the church door.

How weak war is! It cannot touch the real things of life. It can storm and flame, but there is a peace whose serenity it is powerless to disturb. The unseen forces are the mightiest.

As I stood before the little church and read its greeting to all who paused to worship, I thought of the thirty-six great fortifications that ringed Verdun with their defenses, and of the million trained men thrown in to hold the town; but I felt that there was something represented by that little church which, in the making of history and the building of civilization, was mightier than all forts and armies.

Peace be with you! From the life of the only real Conqueror the world has ever known, that message pours down the ages.

Never a life so storm-set as His, and yet never a life so serene. The world did its utmost to batter down and destroy His peace, but when He left it, the one thing He had to bequeath to His followers was "peace." "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you." Standing there on the street of the ruined town, it seemed to me that what men most need is not war but peace; not the peace made by war but the peace made by surrender; not simply the peace worked out by a group of diplomats around a peace table in Paris, but the peace which comes when man lays down his arms against God. It is a hollow victory that lets a man plough his fields and herd his cattle unmolested, but that leaves him at war with his heavenly Father. Poor is he and perilous his condition, whose peace can only be maintained by force of arms. Happiness and real security come not until there settles about us "the peace of God which passeth all understanding" and which is pledged to "garrison our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus."

This is what that church which had survived the ruin of war in battered Verdun seemed to be saying to the old town.

Verdun will be rebuilt, but how? Already it is rebuilding, and the spirit that lays its hand to such a task is magnificent. But is the Verdun of the future to be merely a fort? Is it to build up again what some future kaiser's war hordes may destroy? If so, it builds but for a day. "There is a city that hath foundations whose builder and maker is God." The city that war cannot destroy is one fashioned after the city John saw "coming down from God out of heaven." It is a city whose defenses are in the character of its people. Let Verdun level its medieval walls, and come out of its underground corridors, and melt its guns into the tools of industry, if it would build a city safe and strong.

And the message to Verdun is the same for France. The day is past for men to seek in war the way to glory. If the four years of blood and death through which we have passed can teach us anything, it would seem

to be the folly of seeking to found civilization on war.

If France is to become a greater nation; if she is to escape the perils which threatened her before the war, as well as build up into enduring greatness out of the war, she must hearken to the things which are represented by the House of Peace in the Crater of War, over whose portal those who enter may still read: "Jesus Christ, the Way, the Truth, and the Life."

The lesson is for a larger audience than France. It is for all men. We are longing for a peace that will abide. We would drive war forever from the earth. But how is war permanently to be put out of business? A League of Nations is good as far as it goes, but a League of Nations based on what? War worships force. Is it likely that a League of Nations whose authority is to be maintained by force will put war out of business? Something besides an international police force is needed. The world is freer than it has ever been; but as outward restraints are broken, inward restraints must

be established. As men are less and less controlled, they must more and more learn to control themselves. How is this to be accomplished? The answer takes us to the church door in Verdun, and bids men sit at the feet of Him Who said, "Peace be with you."

Not until He has His way with men; not until His teachings have become the practice of individuals and nations; not until the golden rule He brought to our weary world has become our standard for all of life's relations, will the world have permanent rest from war.

It is not an idle dream to hope that all this may come to pass. As well try to tie the rising sun down to the sky-line with a rope of sand, as well try to halt the tides of the sea by shouting at its waves, as to keep the Prince of Peace from His throne in the heart of humanity. "Peace be with you!" He said it, and the day will come, for "the government shall be upon his shoulder," and "of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end."

In the battered, shell-shot Cathedral at Soissons, whose walls and spire are wrecked beyond the possibility of restoration, we found uninjured a wonderful picture of "The Great Supper." Serenely from the canvas the faces of the Christ and His disciples were looking out on that scene around them of the ruin wrought by war. The unmarred picture of the Eucharist seemed to speak of things which war cannot kill. They are the treasures the world must claim if it would bid successful defiance to the forces that destroy.

XII

THE CHÂTEAU AT CLAYE

THE attention of visitors in Claye is called to a small château which stands near the roadside, and which has nothing to attract attention save the fact that one day a man sitting in a room of the house said something that has gone round the world and will live forever.

Claye is a dozen miles from Paris on the road to Château Thierry. In the early days of September, 1914, the town was aquiver with excitement, and the faces of the people were full of fear. The Germans were thundering in on Paris. Less than a month before I had left Paris, but there was no fear then that the pride of France was in serious peril of falling into the hands of the Hun. The people were alive to the seriousness of the war, but they were not hysterical. There was every confidence in the outcome.

With quiet and grim determination the people set themselves to the task which, since the days of '71, they had seen; and with patriotic alacrity the sons of France had responded to the call to the colours.

But the unexpected had happened. With incredible swiftness, the German Army had driven through Belgium, and into France. German strategy had outwitted the original plan of the French Staff, which was to strike the foe beyond the Rhine. Retirement followed retirement at the speed of from thirty to forty kilometres a day; and September first found the French at Claye and the Germans at Meaux, the next town beyond. Indeed the Germans came closer to Paris than Meaux, for some of their patrols entered the town of Claye itself. It looked as if Paris was doomed, and seemed that the war, so dramatically timed by the Kaiser, would quickly end in victory for the war lord. There is a legend that he was waiting somewhere on a Belgian hill with a goodly company of the Prussian Guard in full dress uniform, all ready for a spectacular entry into

Paris. Those were dark days for the cause of freedom.

In the château at Claye, on the night of September first, sat a man with a square jaw and no look of fear in his face. He could wait, but he could strike, too, when he had waited long enough. From the room in the little château of Claye, hard by the roadside, that fateful September night, General Joffre issued his famous order: "They shall not pass!"—"*Ils ne passeront pas!*"

Then things began to happen. The allied line stiffened like steel, and the Germans met a resistance in which the French fought like demons. To his troops General Joffre said: "At the moment when a battle begins on which the fate of this country depends, every man must be reminded that the time is past for looking behind; every effort must bear on attacking and driving back the enemy. When a unit can no longer advance, it must keep at all costs the ground gained, and die where it stands, rather than fall back. In the present circumstances, no flinching can be tolerated." The next morn-

ing fighting of the most atrocious kind began. Gallieni, the Governor of Paris, emptied the city of its garrison to strengthen Joffre's line. On the nights of September sixth and seventh, strange things were happening on the road from Paris to Claye. A thousand taxi-cabs, each filled with soldiers armed to the teeth and ready to die for country, were speeding through the darkness to the battle front. For seven days the savage fighting lasted. The Hun did not pass. The foe was thrown back routed and in confusion. Paris was saved. The war was to go on until the last seat of autocracy should crumble and fall.

It was a glorious victory. No wonder the visitor pauses as he passes through Claye, and views with profound interest the little château from which issued the order that changed history.

Is this all? Have we come to the real explanation of the victory in that first battle of the Marne? There cannot be given too much praise to French strategy and valour; but are we to stop there in our

diagnosis of the forces which changed seemingly certain defeat into victory?

Careful investigation has discovered that other things worked confusion to the Hun. Had he kept on instead of halting at Meaux, there is reason to believe that nothing could have kept him from marching into Paris. Why did he not keep on? It is said that the German generals were awaiting the arrival of the Crown Prince, who was to ride at the head of his victorious army into the vanquished city. For three days they waited, but these three days gave Joffre time to prepare. The vanity of the Hohenzollern fought for the French.

Investigation has also brought out the fact that the German Army had surrendered itself to an orgy of drunkenness, and these intoxicated soldiers were unfit for efficient service. Extracts from the diary of a staff lieutenant in Von Kluck's army, found on a prisoner, describe this. He says, speaking of the German soldiers: "The certainty of instant victory and a triumphant entry into Paris keeps their nerves taut. But for that

certainly, they would drop from exhaustion, and lie down wherever they happened to be, so as to sleep at last anywhere and anyhow. . . . It is the ecstasy of victory that keeps the men alive; but in order to make their bodies as light as their souls, they drink to excess. The drink, too, helps them to keep their legs. To-day the General, after an inspection, has gone mad with rage. He wanted to stop this collective drunkenness. We have just dissuaded him from extreme measures. We must not be too harsh, else the men would cease to move on. Such abnormal fatigue makes abnormal excitement indispensable. Once in Paris, we will stop it all. No alcohol once we are there. Order will return when we rest on our laurels."

This was written on September second. The next day he wrote: "Our men are not aware that we have left, for the time being, the road to Paris. They are so sure of being at the gates of Paris to-morrow or the next day that it would be cruel to tell them the truth. They believe that the

period of fighting is over, that the French Army is destroyed and in hiding, and that we are going to enter Paris singing and drinking.

“I have been about the forest in a motor-car behind our armies. The sight is awful; the French guns have opened bloody gaps in our ranks. The road is strewn with bodies in heaps. Dead bodies, thousands of empty tins, and millions of empty bottles—such is the jetsam left by the flood of our army.”

The vices of the German soldier fought for the French. It was not the first time that the wickedness of men has been made to serve a righteous cause. There is an old story that comes to us across the pages of Holy Writ, of another army encamping near a city whose doom it sought, surrendered to a night of revelry and drunkenness. The next morning they were all “dead corpses.”

The victory of the French that first week in September of 1914 was not accidental. It was more than the result of military prowess. It was predestined. Strange

stories are told of supernatural sights that were seen and miraculous help that was given. One may explain as he will; but the careful student of events will find it hard to explain the first battle of the Marne without an "Unseen Hand." Not only in the château at Claye was a determined man saying it, but from His throne in the heavens the Power That rules the world was saying: "They shall not pass."

What was true of that battle is characteristic of the whole war. Repeatedly there have been times when nothing earthly stood between Germany and victory. All that the Hun needed to do was to march through. But for some strange reason, he did not. He hesitated, and lost. Why did a foe that could strike such swift and unerring blows blunder and fumble at the strategic moment?

God has been in this war from the start. The ultimate outcome has never been in real jeopardy. Too many things have happened at the psychological moment for doubt to challenge the reality of unseen

allies. Was it an accident that the Piave came to its flood just at the time when the river was needed to fight for Italy?

The war has ended with victory for the forces that were fighting for freedom and humanity, not because French surpassed Teuton strategy, not because the soldiers of the Allies were better trained and more courageous than those they opposed, but because, back of events in this world, there is a Power that eternally and resistlessly makes for world betterment.

“ Right forever on the scaffold,
 Wrong forever on the throne;
 But that scaffold rules the future,
 And behind the dark unknown,
 Standeth God amid the shadows,
 Keeping watch above His own.”

The world will be stupid if it forgets this. France has had enough to call her back to religion. God is giving the nation that put Him aside a new day of opportunity. Will France see it and shake off her materialism and sensuality, and give her allegiance to the Truth that makes men free?

In the early weeks of the armistice, the people who thronged the streets which centre about the entrance to the Madeleine, the pride of Paris, saw a great sign over the church door, on which was painted this message:

“VENITE ADOREMUS.”

That is the supreme lesson of the war. That is the message of victory to France. That is the call of God to men across the sodden fields of the slain and the cemeteries where rest the bodies of our soldier dead.

A new world order is to be established, a new civilization is to be built; but it will not be done by people who repudiate God. The blasphemer is not a social asset. This is no time for negations. What the world needs is faith, the vision of clear-eyed souls who see the unseen.

VENITE ADOREMUS !

XIII

IN THE GERMAN CHURCH AT NEUWIED

AT eight-thirty A. M. I had attended the chaplain's service in the German church at Neuwied; at three-thirty P. M. I preached in the same church to a congregation composed largely of American soldiers, but at ten-thirty A. M. in this church I attended the German service and listened attentively to a sermon by the Lutheran pastor, in the German language, not a word of which did I understand. Later, however, a synopsis of the sermon was given me by one who heard it and who did understand German. From what he told me, it was very much such a sermon as one might hear any Sunday in the average American church.

As I sat there in that German church, part of a congregation made up almost entirely of former subjects of the ex-Kaiser, and

took part with them, in so far as I could, in the worship of a common Saviour, strange feelings came over me and I began to ask myself some searching and perplexing questions.

These people into whose church I had come, to the prayers and sermon of whose minister I was listening, in the music of whose hymns my own soul was rising to meet God, and in whose act of common worship I was a willing partaker, represented to me all that was brutal and hateful.

I could make no apology for the beastly conduct of the war on the part of the Hun, and I desired to make none. I thought of all the long catalogue of unspeakable outrages the German soldiers had committed, of the infamies practiced on Belgium, of the bombing of school children, of the murder of Edith Cavel, of the sinking of the *Lusitania*, of the shells aimed at Red Cross hospitals, and of Germany's repudiation of every ethical principle in her conduct of the war. Again and again, with all the invective I could muster, I had denounced all this

in my efforts to present our great cause to the people back home. And yet, there I sat as a part of a German congregation, worshipping with them, and myself to preach a few hours later, from that same pulpit, the same Gospel and the same Christ.

Could these people in the church all be hypocrites? Were they feigning to subscribe outwardly to a religion which they inwardly repudiated? If so, there was no evidence of it in their faces. They looked devout, and seemed to be finding in the message of their minister and in the services of their church strength and comfort for the duties and trials of life. No, it would not be just to brand them with hypocrisy.

There we were, coming up from two sides of a conflict as irreconcilable as heaven and hell, with the war not yet ended, with only the signing of an armistice making possible a peace hour in which we turned our faces to a common sanctuary, but coming together in mutual respect and adoration of that

which is stronger than death and holier than life.

Did it mean that in face of the war, Germany and the Allies still had something in common? Was I to conclude that notwithstanding our irreconcilable differences in the war, there was still left something of a common heritage, on which to begin to try to build again a house of brotherhood? Did that hour in the German church at Neuwied mean that God has made His children of such kind that, however far apart they may drift, there is always more that unites than divides?

We read from the same Bible, we glorified the same Lord, we proclaimed the same salvation, and we looked by faith to the same eternal city.

It is true the Kaiser's conception of God had seemed to me more pagan than Christian, and I was not prepared to revise that estimate; but, as I looked around upon the quiet faces of that congregation of German people in the Lutheran Church, was there anything to justify an indictment of their

Christianity as a veneer of paganism? Might they not as easily lodge a railing accusation against my religion as I against theirs?

They say that the lines on the old Corinthian columns, if projected high enough, will meet somewhere in the sky above us. Did not that hour in the church mean that there are racial lines in the common humanity of Saxon and Celt, of Teuton and Gaul, which, if projected high enough, will meet; if run up until they enter the atmosphere of God's presence, will be found to blend and become one?

If this be true, then this broken world is not hopelessly and forever divided. The rent which war has torn in the garment of humanity may be mended, and hope may still lift its eyes and look for a day of reconciliation.

Are we to regard such a possibility with disfavour? We can certainly never bring ourselves to have any but the sternest disapproval and a loathing and disgust for the deeds of the Hun in his conduct of the war.

No specious pleas for racial unity, no sentimental appeals on behalf of brotherhood and humanity, no skillful manipulation of the sanctities of religion can ever so mislead us as to incline us to gloss with tolerance those infamies. But are we to make up our minds to cherish hate forever? Is there never to be a reconciliation? The world is too small to keep up this fight. Every interest of mankind clamours for friendship. The wounds must be healed. The breach must be closed. We must get together. How? Where?

As I sat there in the German church at Neuwied it seemed to me that we must begin where we had not yet separated—before the Cross on which our common Saviour had made the supreme sacrifice for us all. If it be true that He has not been alienated from us, that His love is changeless, that His concern is equal and abiding for all men, then we must let Him lead the way to reconciliation.

What does this mean but that religion must mend the broken world, if the hospital

of our maimed and lamed comradeship is to be left behind? We must look beyond the selfish interests of commercialism; we must turn to something more capable than statesmanship and diplomacy; we must be cured forever of the fallacy that war is a virtue, if we are to find a sure and enduring road to internationalism. We must seek our path to fraternity amid those moods in human nature that are deepest, and make our appeal to those passions in the soul which are permanent and racial. We must take our problems where man meets God, and discovers that he and his fellows can never drift so far apart but they still hold a common lease on eternity.

The war is over. Under the conditions which existed it was perhaps inevitable. It has accomplished its purpose. It has reached its objective. But the war is over.

Now, not for war but for peace! Now for the new day and the new world, which must not be a day of discord but a world whose law is love.

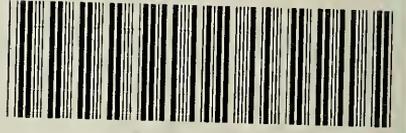
To help the world to such a day should be the task of all who love their fellow-men; for it has always been the task of Him Who loved us all and gave Himself for every man.

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