IN GERMAN HANDS

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IN GERMAN HANDS

THE DIARY OF A SEVERELY WOUNDED PRISONER

BY

CHARLES HENNEBOIS

WITH A PREFACE BY

ERNEST DAUDET

LONDON

WILLIAM HEINEMANN

1916

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PREFACE

On August 24, 1915, I received a letter in the country, where I was then staying, from a *dépôt* for convalescent soldiers in the South. I will make it the exordium of this preface, for it will tell better than I could myself the circumstances in which I made the author's acquaintance. It ran as follows :

" Mon cher Maître,—Do you still remember the young aspirant to a literary career for whom you got a post as reader in the Plon printing press at Meaux ? Up to the present year, I have always sought to express my lasting gratitude by the modest card I have sent you every first of January. This year I was unable to send it, and I must make my excuses.

" I enlisted as a volunteer for the duration of the war, and was severely wounded on October 12, 1914, before Saint-Mihiel. The Germans picked me up on the 16th, amputated my leg, and took me to Metz. On New Year's Day I was in a Boche hospital at Metz-la-Pucelle ; and as might have been expected

my executioners—the word is not too severe —would not allow me to write. Now that I am back in France, where I returned on July 21st of this year, minus a leg and in despair at being unable to fight any more, I recall the kindness with which, three years ago, you received the modest beginner, the young apprentice in versifying.

"I have brought back with me from Germany a diary of my experiences in the field and in captivity, which I have not courage to offer to any Parisian publisher in these troubled times. But I thought that you would perhaps do this generous action; and therefore, as soon as I have made a fair copy of my manuscript I will venture to send it to you, if you will allow me, and to beg you for a short preface."

This letter was signed "Charles Hennebois." The incident it recalled was still fresh in my memory. I remembered a young man, gay and attractive of mien, entering my study one morning with two volumes under his arm, and modestly excusing himself for venturing to ask me to read them and give my opinion of them; further, to help him to find a situation which would secure his little household from want—he had lately married—and enable him to devote his leisure to poetry and the literary

work which seemed at that time the goal of his ambitions.

Everything about him interested me, and moreover, remembering the help I myself received when I arrived in Paris, poor and obscure, I have always tried to be friendly to young people when they have done me the honour of applying to me.

There was a great deal of talent in the two volumes brought me by Charles Hennebois. He had called one *La Veillée ardente*, and the other *La Loi de vivre*; had they not been published by a provincial firm, and written by an unknown poet lacking any connexion with the Parisian press, they would certainly have attracted attention. As I have said above, I was greatly interested in him, and I was happy enough to be able to procure him the means of livelihood he needed. His conduct at the outbreak of the war, his voluntary enlistment when he had been discharged, his bravery, the simplicity with which he spoke of his misfortune, the patriotism I felt still vibrating in him, and finally, the perusal of his diary, naturally increased the sympathy I had felt for him from the beginning. On my recommendation my dear friends and publishers, Plon-Nourrit, whose *employé* he had been, agreed

to publish his book, and my other friend, Edouard Trogan, the editor of the *Correspondant*, gave him hospitality in his great periodical. Finally, my *protégé* asked me to write the preface to his journal, and here it is.

Among all the innumerable books inspired by the war, I do not think there is any more moving than this. Descriptions of battle and the incidents of these bloody struggles occupy little place in it; on the other hand, we follow a tragic sequence of the painful impressions a vanquished combatant feels, when Fortune snatches his weapons from his hands, and seems bent on his destruction. Charles Hennebois had only been at the front a week when he fell with a shattered leg; for four days he lay on the ground without any help, and during those hours of unspeakable suffering, it was a miracle he was not murdered, for at such moments the victorious Germans are merciless to the unhappy wounded left within their reach.

"Some of those wounded the previous day," he writes, "called out to them, begging for water; the Germans finished them off with the butt-ends of their rifles or with their bayonets, and then robbed them."

No one will contest the sincerity of this testimony, and the same may be said of all the

martyrology which forms our wounded man's journal. Directly he was brought into the ambulance station, a German surgeon, as if anxious to be rid of him, decided that his leg must be amputated; this was done; when his wound was examined again at another hospital to which he was transported, he heard the head surgeon declare that he could have saved that leg, if he had been present, and after asking the name of the place where the operation had been performed, he muttered:

"I will go and see about it to-morrow; there is too much slashing there; I must inquire into this business."

It is not only by scenes of this kind that German barbarity is revealed, but also by things the prisoner saw and heard in the course of his captivity. Episodes even more significant and suggestive follow one upon the other in his narrative, interspersed with portraits of persons in whose souls flashes of compassion and generosity are rare. The one or two faces with a benevolent expression are heavily counterbalanced by many full of malice, and hatred gleams in most of the eyes, sometimes manifesting itself in a revolting fashion. The German savages seem to have avenged themselves on the French wounded for their failure to conquer Paris.

Thus this book, written by one outside the zone of military operations for the most part, is nevertheless terribly instructive. The experiences of a single one of our prisoners shows what a large number must have suffered. I will not say more, lest I should minimize the deep and varied impressions the story will make on the mind of the reader, who will recognize the transparent truth of the narrative. The writer sets it forth with a simplicity which makes it the more striking, and if I may say so, more poignant and incontestable.

When I finished these pages which it illuminates so vividly, they left me in the frame of mind I remember to have experienced years ago, when I read Silvio Pellico's immortal book. They have the same accent and the same resignation, the same modest attitude. Hennebois claims no kind of pre-eminence; he knows that his tragic adventure is by no means unique; that those who have endured the same martyrdom as himself are legion; and he seems to aspire to no other glory than that of avenging them by invoking the curses of posterity upon their tormentors.

For the rest, his sufferings have no more shaken his patriotism than his faith in God, and it is this, perhaps, which gives his book its best title to live.

"If," he says in conclusion, "my physical strength has been diminished by the ordeal, my vision has been enlarged, and embraces new things. My faith has not foundered in the tragic encounter with the realities of conflict; I have purified it, set it free from doubt, and I no longer believe in death."

It is the cry of youth, the cry of the poet, but also of the patriot and the Christian, breathing an ardent faith in the glorious destinies of our country, and an invincible confidence in the triumph of Justice and Right over the criminal attacks of barbarism.

ERNEST DAUDET

CONTENTS

I. WOUNDED AND A PRISONER

October 3, 1914. *Morning.*—Chaumont. Day is breaking. In the large deserted station where our train stops some lounging *employés* bring us the latest news.

A great recent success. . . . Our troops are entering Lorraine. . . . The first forts of Metz are under our fire.

We reply by exclamations:

"Really? Is it official?"

"How did you hear it?"

"From the trains that have been going through . . . with the wounded . . . and provisions."

The words "Metz bombarded" flew from mouth to mouth. A murmurous sound ran along the whole train. Eager heads were enframed in every window. The men who were dozing in their seats sprang up suddenly, moved by some invisible spring. Then, all was going well! The young major who had addressed us before we started, in the courtyard of the college that had been transformed into a barrack, had said what was right and true. The "beast" had been started; what we had

to do now was to follow and harass it, without respite.

A short, sharp trumpet-call, and the train started again. I came out of my compartment, which had become unbearable with the mingled odours of food and tobacco-smoke, and climbing into a truck in front of our carriage, I examined the sky. Two or three men and a sergeant, their rifles between their legs, were also scouring the horizon. The clouds were a dirty grey.

The plain seems to be absorbing us. Right and left, the shaven slopes "drag their slow length along" in boundless monotony. Some early tillers of the soil halt by the roadside to see us pass.

Sometimes we pull up suddenly; the guard gets down, has a paper signed, and on we go again. A munition train is just a few minutes ahead of us.

In each station now we see conspicuous notices, describing the characteristics of the German aeroplanes in large type: they are more squat and massive than ours; the Imperial cross is painted on their sides, and they end in a fish-tail.

Our destination has not yet been divulged. We are going down to the Meuse region, to Saint-M.*. . . or T. . . .

Some say to M. . . . A field-wagon, destined for the 61st Regiment, has this address. And this makes us thoughtful.

The same day, about 1 *o'clock.*—In the courtyard of the station. We are at B. . .-le-D. . .

The soldiers stretch and yawn. Two days and two nights in the train is a very tiring experience. Ten in each compartment, wedged in with bags and haversacks, and all the equipment.

Presently we start off in column, towards Saint-M. . . . Thirty-two kilometres. I feel rather nervous, for I am not used to marching. I am a very good walker when I can travel light, but how shall I be able to stand this experience? . . . Better than I expected.

Here we are at N. . .-le-D. . . Halt for ten minutes. A woman passes, pushing a hand-cart full of loaves. In a few seconds we have taken all her wares and paid her. Soldiers have a habit—I may call it a mania—of devouring all their rations at once, without ever thinking of the morrow. When we started we were given provisions to last us three days. After the second day, the most careful had nothing left. What is there to do but eat?

The ribbon of the road unrolls itself before us in all its uniformity. Left and right there

are woods. Not a ray of sunshine. Sometimes we meet patrols; dusty foresters or gendarmes on bicycles. Farther on, a convoy of motor-omnibuses emerges from a cloud of dust. We march in silence; some stragglers have already fallen out of the column. One more hill to climb; then we shall come to V. . . ., where we hope to rest.

Now a sound as of distant thunder makes itself heard. It gains in volume as we advance, it is the harsh voice of the guns. A strange feeling of mingled melancholy and impatience suddenly lays hold of the soldiers. Those among us who know, having already fought in Lorraine, do not share the gaiety of my right-hand neighbour, an incorrigible jester, the true type of the Paris street-boy. Several hang their heads. A Territorial on my right looks steadily at the fields and sighs. We shall all feel better for a halt. The Territorial will shake off his wave of melancholy. Some of the men who were wounded at Etain and Spincourt give various details: that terrific roar was a Prussian 105 mm. At dinner-time the Boches are fond of adding their *marmites* to the French menu. These are not so very dangerous, however, according to the soldiers. Much ado about nothing.

. . . And now the roars are coming in quick succession.

We are not to sleep at V. . . . Barns and houses are all full to overflowing. Army Service Corps and reserves; cattle; an engineers' park, with enormous pontoons resting on their supports; artillery parks and their train, the ammunition wagons concealed under branches to escape the notice of aviators.

And away in the distance, the bombardment continues. A biplane hovers on the horizon, high up in the evening air.

However, at eight o'clock we arrive at R. . . . This time we are really to halt. It is beginning to rain. We pile arms, and wait patiently.

Where is the regiment?

Those we meet, infantrymen and artillerymen, cannot tell us.

In the trenches, perhaps, somewhere on the left.

No orders come. A fine, icy rain falls steadily on the road. The more active among us have thrown off their greatcoats. Clad in their short tunics, they go off into the darkness, with that marauding instinct so general among soldiers, and come back after a time, some bringing cabbages, others potatoes, beetroot, and carrots, which they at

once set to work to peel. It is nearly nine o'clock. A cold wind has risen which drives the rain before it. In a very short time fires are made all along the slope . My fine polished saucepan is unstrapped, filled with water, and placed on the fire. I make no attempt to explain how, and with what dry wood, the fire was lighted at that hour. I am still one of the uninitiated. I am and I remain one of those to whom the worthy cooks apply very unflattering terms and treat somewhat unceremoniously.

Eleven o'clock.—We have had orders to bivouac in a barn. The soup is almost ready. We swallow a good quart of it, and go off to storm our quarters. Alas! we have to parley. The owner refuses to let us in, complaining of some past exaction. We are obliged to break open the door and get in in spite of him, as our adjutant orders.

Ten minutes later every one is snoring in chorus. I try in vain to get to sleep. I am aching in every limb, and I write these notes by the light of a lantern.

October 4. *Morning.* — The day breaks grey and livid. It is *réveillé*. The men get up, grumbling. Bugle calls answer one another. The cooks of last night have taken my saucepan again. Poor thing! It was

such a nice one. I had rubbed it up and it had shone in the sunshine since we had set out from the Cévennes; but now its brilliance is eclipsed by an ignominious coating of soot. There is worse before it, however.

"We are going to make the coffee in it," says a merry fellow, "and you needn't grumble. It won't help the Boches to crack your nut now."

I had not thought of my "nut"! The cooks have done me a service!

We drink our coffee in the rain. A ray of sunshine, pale and mournful, begins to pierce the clouds. It is not fine weather, but it is a promise. We are all cheered by it.

Presently we receive orders to go to F. . . . where a non-commissioned officer of the . . . th Regiment will take us to our Chief. This unexpected number makes me prick up my ears. I question the lieutenant. He raises his long thin arms to Heaven and answers angrily:

"What on earth does it matter to you whether you go here or there? All stations are good. Did you come here to dance?"

I say no more. I make off. After all, there or elsewhere, it's all the same. . . . Still, as I chose the 61st when I enlisted, I should like to have fought in its ranks.

At F. . . . we get our baptism of shells. Just as the first group of us entered the village, a shell suddenly tore a hole in the church tower, crumpled up the face of the clock, and fell with a dull noise fifty yards from us, killing an officer's horse. Not one of us recoiled.

We then marched past the General, a tall man with a long beard, bent like an old oak, but with an eagle eye. Leaning on the arm of his orderly officer, he snapped at our guide:

"Who are all these grandfathers?"

Well, he dressed us down pretty smartly, this distinguished Chief! It is true we have a great many Territorials in our group. But all the same, I feel vexed. . . .

We now go into a potato field at the foot of a hill, and up a narrow path towards the crest of the woods. After a laborious progress of three-quarters of an hour, we come to a glade in the forest.

The Major receives us at the entrance. He is very thin, and his haggard face is full of kindness, though drawn by suffering. We are at once distributed to the different companies and sections.

October 5.—I am in the 5th Battalion. Combes and the adjutant C. . . . have been

put in the 6th; the Marseillais is in the 5th. We are able to meet sometimes.

The men of my squadron are survivors of the battles which endangered B. . .-le-D. . . in September. Their sufferings were terrible. Last night, round the fire, they described to me the struggle the French infantrymen had to make, one against ten. And the scene would have tempted a painter. The background was the forest in a mist of rain. In the middle of our hut, round a huge fire of blazing billets, a group of men with bushy beards, muddy garments, *képis* that have lost all colour. . . . The talk is carried on in undertones.

Now and then there is the sound of a footstep. A hand opens the door, made of branches fastened together; and the sergeant on guard mutters:

"Throw some ashes on the fire. . . . The flames are too high. . . . You will get us all killed."

Indeed, when I go out into the glade, I am aghast. As far as the eye can reach I see fires, huge fires, but slightly shaded by the walls of the huts; their red flames, some half a yard high, cast a flickering halo on the dark green of the thickets. . . .

I take a few steps in silence, impressed by

the scene. Far off in the coppice, towards the German trenches, the mournful cry of an owl evokes an answering cry. A horse gives a prolonged snort. Silence falls again. Rolled up in their greatcoats, my comrades are already asleep, their heads on their bags, their feet stretched out to the fire.

October 6.—War life has begun for us. We get shells twice a day, at meal-times. Hard work all the time. As soon as my new comrades heard from the chief that I was a volunteer, they allotted all the wearisome tasks to me. A Southern veteran gave me to understand the situation in the following terms: "You know, old chap, you could have cut the whole business. Well, you didn't choose to. So you didn't come here to stand planted like a post in front of our saucepans. Be off and fetch the grub. . . . And after the first battle you shall tell me all about your wish to serve, and perhaps some news of one of your limbs. Now then, away with you!"

So I do plenty of odd jobs. At seven in the morning, I walk over a mile to Fresnes to fetch water. I go down and come up the horrible little path through the wood with the straps of nine cans over my shoulders and a saucepan in each hand. The track is rough and slippery. As soon as I get back,

I am pounced upon to plaster earth against the closely woven branches of the sergeants' hut; then I do the same for the commanding officer's hut. Afterwards I cut wood, and then it is time to think about dinner. They give me a pointed stake, and I go off some thousand yards to fetch a hindquarter of beef which I impale on my stake and sling over my shoulder, the raw flesh dangling upon my fine new overcoat. After this, I go out to forage.

"We want some potatoes! Look sharp!"

So I look sharp. But I rather long to see the Boches! It would be more interesting. The more so as, in reward for my services, I only have the right to about half a yard of ground; my head is sheltered from the rain, but my feet are out of doors.

"The deuce!" says the corporal, "the hut is very small, and you were the last to come."

"In the next attack," says the Marseillais, who does not forget to come and see me, "some will be killed, and then we shall take their places!"

A delightful prospect!

October 7.—Last evening I passed a touching group on the pathway: two colonial stretcher-bearers supporting a wounded man. He was walking with great difficulty, his tall

figure towering above the orderlies. When I came close to him, I saw how terribly he was wounded. A large fragment of shell had broken his jaw, laying his cheek open from top to bottom, and slashing his chin. The eye above was all swollen, and was no doubt destroyed. The blood was pouring down his face and soaking his tunic. He might have been tracked by the great drops that rolled to the ground.

I stopped short suddenly, stiffening into a salute of pride and respect. I admire the courage, the extraordinary strength thanks to which the quivering flesh does not succumb, crushed to the earth, but reacts, and obeys the commanding will unflinchingly. This man seemed very great to me.

A few yards farther on I met another group: two other orderlies carrying a stretcher. A wounded man was lying on it, both his thighs torn open; he seemed to be trying to clasp his pale trembling hands together. But here again there were no groans, no cries, but high courage, the highest perhaps, that which is not called forth by present danger.

Very soon I heard what had happened to these men. The first was a lieutenant, the standard-bearer, they said of the . . . th Colonial Regiment. The second was a cap-

tain. In the rustic hut which serves as the officers' mess, they were just sitting down to dinner when a high explosive shell burst in the middle of the group, killing and wounding several men.

October 8.—Every evening we go out as supporting troops. Others are attacking at the barracks, below the rifle range, towards the suburbs of Saint-M. . . . We are held in reserve. Our regiment, which suffered severely at V. . . ., was decimated at B. . . . and at H. . . ., and later, in September, at the time of the taking of Saint-M. . . . and the sudden advance of the German troops towards the road to B. . . ., has men, but very few officers. We are expecting reinforcements to give us these.

Oh! those nights in the woods! . . . We go off at seven o'clock. It is already very dark. We advance cautiously towards the crest, skirting the rifle range. We march quietly, in silence. The Boches are quite close, some two hundred yards off in the plain. Their machine-guns are trained on the thicket. Should the sound of our footsteps or the click of our arms give the alarm, we should be mown down mercilessly.

My Marseillais is quite pleased when the battalion musters. He slips away from his

company, makes his way from rank to rank, takes up his position beside me, and we gossip together in whispers. He suffers horribly from the cold. My winter fishing on the Marne and also at Mauvezin have accustomed me to motionless silence under icy north winds, but I could not have imagined such misery. We are forbidden to stir. The grass comes up to our loins. We are ordered to keep silence. The majority crouch down, resting their knapsacks on the bushes. They put their loaded rifles within reach of their hands, spread their check handkerchiefs over their mouths to stop the exhalations, and sleep soundly in this deadly temperature. As for me, I cannot sleep. P. . . . comes over to me, and presses close to me, but is none the warmer. Sometimes a shot is fired. It is answered at once by others, and the machine-guns close at hand begin their deafening crackle. At such moments all one's martial instincts urge one forward, to take part in the battle. Our nerves are exasperated by the dullness of inaction.

The firing soon ceases. The mistake of some patrol or some nervous sentry caused this useless noise. The cold makes our immobility cruel. We begin to stir, to jump on one foot and come down upon the other.

The moon rises, clear and brilliant. Its white metallic lustre glances on our pannikins and the handles of our bayonets. A white frost is falling. The horrible cold lays hold of you; a numbness steals over you. You have to make an heroic effort not to succumb and sink into a sleep that would indeed be mortal.

But the hours pass somehow. Dawn whitens the crest of the hill. Our task is finished. We may go now, staggering like drunken men, to our bivouacs.

October 12. *Morning.*—This evening we shall see them at last. We are no longer in reserve. We have received our reinforcements, and the battalion is complete. We have even a captain, a luxury of which our company has been deprived for a whole month. And he is a good fellow. Every morning when he gets up, a splendid cotton nightcap appears under his *képi*. This morning he called me: "You are a volunteer?" "Yes, *mon capitaine*." "You will be a corporal after the first engagement." "I don't care for promotion, *mon capitaine*." "But *we* do. We want men, and men of determination. You will be a sergeant as soon as possible, and then an officer." Oho! the good captain goes ahead!

But this is no moment for laughter. It will be a serious business to-night. Leaning on my knapsack, I have just written a letter to my wife. I have said nothing of the attack. When we have taken the enemy's trench, I will write her a long letter. But I get a card off. I have had no word since I left home. I am not complaining. I know they have written, and that their letters have been held up.

The General comes to us. He speaks to several men.

"Have you finished your soup? I want you, my children."

A military salute. "We are ready, General." I don't know where the attack is to be, but I believe it is on the plateau. I saw the Chief just now, making his way among the branches, and examining that portion of the ground through his glasses.

Come, take heart of grace! I have unbuckled my haversack. There were so many things in it that it was heavy, and marching would have been difficult with that friend on my back. I should not like to lag behind.

The artillery is already preparing our attack. It has been thundering from a hundred mouths for the last hour.

I think of my Jean, my little N.C.O. Does

he know that now, on this October night, his elder brother is rushing forward to his baptism of bullets? . . . He knows these well enough. He fired the first shell into the Prussian masses which were marching on Longwy in August. Brother, God keep you!

* *The same day. Evening.*[1]—This is an unforgettable hour. The guns which have been thundering since the afternoon are silent now; the 155's with their dull roar; the grave, hoarse 120's; the shrieking 75's; the furious 65's have done their work, holding up the enemy. This work is made manifest by a red glow, high on the horizon. The suburbs of C. . . . are on fire. The flames are spreading below Saint-M. . . ., close by. The village of M. . . . is blazing like a torch. Now it is the turn of the little infantrymen to get a footing down there, and conquer those ruins, evading the sinister ambush of the machine-guns.

We are lying on the ground, close to the edge of the wood. A tragic silence hangs over the column. The men who are to form the *liaison* between the companies detach them-

[1] The passages in this diary which are marked with an asterisk were written after the event, and inserted in their proper places.

selves from the rest at the word of command of the captain, who is acting major this evening. I answered for my company. My voice did not tremble. I am exasperated by the delay, but I am master of my will. My legs are ready for the rush. The others, lying in a stubble-field, are waiting for the signal. The first trench must be only a few yards off. We crawl along over this dangerous piece of ground. Before us is the unknown, darkness and silence. The ground is torn up by the innumerable shells that have rained upon it. Here is a parapet. The captain is there, facing the earthwork.

"*Liaison*-men!"

He says this under his breath. We answer in the same way.

"17th?"

"Present."

"You will pass to the right, the 18th to the left, 19th and 20th to the rear; you will advance in support."

We crawl a little way. The order is soon transmitted. We have rejoined our sections. There is an unspeakable silence, then all of a sudden, a ringing, formidable shout, repeated by furious voices: "Forward!" and a sudden rush. I hear the clash of arms, short gasping breaths; a tornado of shadowy

forms, yells of pain, cries of distress. Flashes of light pierce the darkness. In the field of lucerne where we are charging, we are decimated by rifle-fire. Voices choke and die away. Ah! where are we going?

Suddenly a white glare from the direction of Saint-M. . . . shifts and passes over us. It is the German searchlight. It dazzles us, seizes us, and keeps tight hold of us. Then the machine-guns begin. The charge slackens. It whirls round and round, like a horse wounded in the forehead, and its shouts become fainter. Then there is an evident movement towards the declivity which offers some natural cover. The bullets follow our desperate rush with a buzzing as of wasps. We clutch our rifles convulsively. Suddenly, in front of us, a hollow in the ground. The flash of the rifles shows it to us: "This way! This way! Courage! We've got them!" Bodies tumble into the shadow. When the searchlight releases its howling prey, we grope our way along distractedly, like drunken men.

The rush on the right is stronger. Presently there are twenty of us, led by a non-commissioned officer. There is a machine-gun in front of us. "Forward! Forward!" The searchlight blinds us. Are there ten of

us left? . . . Then our leader collapses. Raising himself on his elbows, he yells:

"Fall back! I'm done for! Clear out! My God, you haven't a chance!"

I stand stock still, utterly bewildered, an admirable target for the rifles. What? Is this all? Is the attack broken, repulsed, an utter failure? . . . Despairing cries, groans, and noises reach me from the farther end of the field. Oh! the horror of the end of a battle! I am about to leave the hollow, when the searchlight grips me again. The fire has not diminished. The machine-gun goes on with its mowing, in infernal rhythm. And *my* body too collapses suddenly, facing the enemy who is aiming at it. In vain I get up and try to stand. I fall again, helpless. My right leg is broken.

The firing continues. The metallic flashes never cease, nor the crackling flight of venomous little bullets across my forehead. Our group, lying on the ground, serves as a target for the marksmen. How many of us are still living? Perhaps I am the only one. And then the projectiles come thick and fast. They whistle by ruthlessly, grazing my haversack, my pannikin, severing the strap of my water-bottle. And a prayer goes up from my heart, while the warm blood runs along my leg, a

prayer for all who are dear to me, and for all those who lie on the vast plateau, killed in this battle.

Now the guns begin to roar again. Volleys of shells sweep over the field in the distance. Have they found the remnant, the contingent that had survived? The blinding ray disappears and reappears. It is seeking us, surely and mercilessly, stopping sometimes on our heads. We lie motionless. It goes off again. But the machine-guns rage away. What time can it be? I look at my watch; it is not yet midnight. Oh! if I could get out of this, crawl gently back to the hollow close by, in a field of lucerne. A great body has fallen on me. I roll it away laboriously.

The roar of the guns has ceased. The rifle-fire is dying down. . . . Shadows pass near me. . . . Are they friends or enemies? I lie still. They melt away into the fog. A little yellow smoke down towards Saint-M. . . . and towards Ch. . . . show that fires are burning there. I lift up my haversack and get rid of it. What cries I hear in the distance, the vain calls and groans of the dying! A childish voice rises shrilly, begging for water.

The firing has ceased. A few reports, less and less distinct . . . and at last silence. Then I begin to drag myself along slowly.

It is a long, difficult business. My leg does not follow. My foot, twisted and pendulous, catches in the grass, and I have to take it in both hands every few seconds and pull it out carefully. It takes me rather more than three hours to travel about five yards.

At last I am in shelter, but utterly exhausted. I have left my knapsack, my haversack, and all my equipment beside the dead bodies of my comrades. So I have nothing to drink. Lying on my back, I look up at a few stars above me. A drowsiness comes over me. It is fever, no doubt; but I do not sleep, and so I wait for the morning.

October 13. *Ten o'clock.*—I am about thirty yards from the German trenches. I can see them if I lift my head a little. My right leg is broken below the knee, the calf is torn and pendulous. I had some terrible visitors. But God protected me.

I am not in very great pain. I have not lost consciousness. But I am very thirsty, and I cannot move.

* *October* 13. *About five o'clock.*—I was lying at this moment on the edge of the field of lucerne, somewhat hidden by the tall grass, and in the pale morning light, through the mists that were rising from the ground, I saw three German patrols moving over the ground.

Some of the wounded called out to them, begging for water. The Germans finished them off with the butt-ends of their rifles or their bayonets, and then robbed them. I saw this done a few yards from where I was. A group of seven or eight men were lying there, struck down by cross-fire from the machine-guns. Some of them were still alive, and spoke imploringly to the Germans. They were butchered as I say, robbed, and thrown in a heap.

I gathered from the cries that reached me from other parts of the field, from the laughter, followed by dull blows, and the subsequent silence, that other hapless creatures were sharing the same fate. I will not describe the anguish I endured. I thought my last hour was at hand, and if I lifted up my soul to God, it was less to ask Him to save me—for I had so little hope for myself at that moment—than to implore Him to soften and heal the grief of those dear to me. I prepared for death.

Footsteps approached above me on the left. A minute before I had determined to die bravely, denouncing those who were outraging humanity by such deeds as cowards and murderers. Something stronger than myself made me close my eyes. I stiffened my body and lay motionless. The Germans thought I was

dead. One of them turned me over with a violent kick, and greedy, brutal hands began to strip me of my possessions. I felt them taking the watch I was wearing on my wrist in a leather bracelet, my modest purse, containing a little gold, and a knife with several blades which I had bought at Toulouse the day before I left. My pocket-book, my pencil, and a notebook, which I had slipped between my shirt and my skin, escaped their search, and also my tobacco-pouch, my cigarette-papers, and my matches, which I had put into my right-hand pocket under my handkerchief.

The footsteps died away; but I remained perfectly still. I gave myself up for lost. After this patrol another would pass. I thanked God for His intervention, and I awaited death, almost desiring to hasten the end of my tortures.

More than an hour passed in this manner. I had at last ventured to turn over—by dint of agonized efforts—and had got into a somewhat less painful position, when fresh footsteps drew near. I had neither the time nor the inclination to feign a second time, for bayonets were already at my breast. A last instinctive impulse, an effort of thought, nevertheless brought the words that were

to save me to my lips. I know a little German, of the kind one learns at school. But I managed to elaborate the following sentence :

" Why," I asked, " do you want to kill me ? Is it thus you respect the lives of your fellow-creatures ? Can a disarmed man be an enemy ? "

I spare the reader the faults of syntax which no doubt graced it ; however, it was effectual. The two weapons were withdrawn at an authoritative gesture. " Germany is merciful. She does not kill the wounded," said a man, who, as I afterwards learned, was a Bavarian student.

Alas ! I knew the exact opposite ! I had seen it with my own eyes. But I refrained from saying so. It was hardly the moment for protest.

A fusillade began, distant and intermittent. The soldiers left me, but not till my protector had assured me that I need fear nothing. He was on duty in that sector, and would keep an eye on me till the stretcher-bearers could come and fetch me.[1]

[1] It will be seen further on in my notes that he kept his word. Writing now, after a considerable lapse of time, I can do no less than assure him of the gratitude of the *man*. And if I emphasize this word, it is because the soldier, the Frenchman, cannot allow that he owes much gratitude or affection

October 14.—The night has been very long and very cold. The student came back in the evening and gave me water. He has just been round again. He expressed surprise at finding me still here.

"The Germans fall back from one hundred to two hundred yards every evening, monsieur, to avoid surprises. Why don't your stretcher-bearers take the opportunity to come and fetch you?"

I might have answered that the Germans have often fired on the Red Cross, and that therefore the orderlies no longer dare to venture into the lines within fire from the trenches. I thought it wiser to say nothing. And my visitor left me.

He is a handsome fellow, tall and plump, with a chestnut beard, and clear, gentle eyes. He seems grave and sad. He is a non-commissioned officer. He speaks French fairly well.

I set myself to wait again. How long the hours are! And clouds begin to gather in the sky. I think of all my dear ones. . . . I do not regret my action. One cannot do one's duty by halves. . . . If I am to die

to an enemy of his race for simply doing his duty. He would have deserved more if he had begun earlier in the day to save the wounded who had fallen in this attack.

without a loving hand to close my eyes their last look will have been for you, Agnes, and for the others, our loved ones. . . . And you will wear your mourning as one wears a cross, a decoration won on the battlefield.

October 15. *Noon.*—It rained all the evening and part of the night. What misery I have endured! My greatcoat is wet through. My wound is soaked. I have nothing to cover it with . . . and I cannot move.

If I come out of this, I shall be lucky indeed! I was very thirsty in the night. When the rain ceased, I made a cigarette, in the hope of soothing my parched mouth a little. My tobacco and papers were not wet, and I managed to roll my cigarette. But when I tried to light it, a neighbouring machine-gun peppered me with bullets.

Is this the way they fall back? . . . True, this morning the student apologized. I must not smoke nor strike matches after dark.

October 16.—Another night in the rain. I had a moment of weakness. If my rifle had been within reach, I should have put an end to my cruel sufferings.

May God forgive me! . . . But to die slowly like this, day after day, without relief.

I cannot see very well. I am tortured by fever. My thoughts are confused. How many days more before I am at rest ?

The same day. Saint-M. . . . Three o'clock. —God had mercy on me. When I had lost all hope, He sent the student to me with two men.

" As your people don't come and fetch you," he said simply, " we are going to carry you down to the end of the field, and the German stretcher-bearers will take you into the town."

Alas ! there is no help for it. . . . I shall be a prisoner.

The student and the two men then lifted me up. Two of them carried me, while the third, holding up my dangling foot, walked slowly in front.

We reached our destination after a journey of a few hundred yards. Some stretcher-bearers and a German doctor were on the spot. The doctor examined me, shook his head several times, and gave a curt order. They placed me on a stretcher. The student looked a farewell. I thanked him briefly, and he returned to his post, followed by his comrades.

I can feel no affection for him. He has

saved my life, but there is no gratitude in my heart for him. Still, I pray God to spare his life, or if he should fall some day, to let him come into compassionate hands, which will do for him what he has done for me.

II. THE HOSPITAL OF ST.-M. . . .

October 17.—Carried on a stretcher to the Hospital of Saint-M. . . . During the long march thither, my bearers set me down behind the barracks on the edge of a pit the soldiers were digging. This was not a very agreeable sensation. The gaping hole was hardly inviting. The stretcher-bearers noted the impression it made on me. They laughed, opening their great mouths wide, and at last started again.

We pass the villas of the suburb, burnt and destroyed. The main street is blocked by barricades, for fighting goes on there every evening. Presently we go over a level crossing and come out on the bridge. Two of its arches are still intact. The third is of wood. The French artillery batters this bridge incessantly, and just as my bearers put me down behind a block of stone, after we have crossed it, to take breath, a huge shell falls into the Meuse with a sinister snort, sending up a column of water several yards high. Nevertheless, a group of old women, careless of danger, surround me and begin to talk. My

orderlies are a few yards off, speaking to some engineers. Questions come thick and fast.

"Where were you wounded?"

"How long ago?"

"Your leg broken? . . . Poor fellow!"

"Would you like some coffee?"

"They've taken everything here."

"We have nothing left."

"We have to stay on the first floor. The soldiers live in the basement."

This painful talk is cut short by our departure. And presently we reach the hospital. The doors fly open for us. There is a smell of ether and chloroform. Finally, I am taken into a very light room, and set down at the end of a blood-stained table.

A doctor in a blouse examines me at once. He feels my pulse. "*Zu müde! Noch nicht!*" ("Too tired! Not yet!") He orders some coffee to be brought for me. For the next hour, they bring me a hot bowlful, every ten minutes. At the end of this interval I am ready.

They are just about to place me on the table when the door opens. Another wounded man is brought in on a second stretcher. His poor face is livid and convulsed with agony. He is a Territorial, as his badges show. He looks about forty years old, perhaps not so much.

They question him in vain. He seems unconscious, perhaps hears nothing. His breast, rising and falling very feebly, is covered with blood. His eyes are dim and glazed. He has no papers to establish his identity. The number on his badges shows that he belonged to the reinforcements that came up on the 9th or 10th. But what is his name? A priest comes in to administer the last rites of the Church.

When this is over, they bring the stretcher and the body close to me. I lean over the dying man. I take one of his hands in mine. It does not tremble. There is no answer when I speak to him. His eyes remain dull and fixed. Then they throw back his coat, and open his shirt. His breast and abdomen, riddled with bayonet thrusts, form one large wound. The doctor bends down suddenly, with a look of lively surprise. He turns to me and asks, with some hesitation:

"Was there hand-to-hand fighting in the trenches on Monday?"

"No, *Monsieur le Docteur*. The attack was broken before we got to your trenches."

I spoke gravely. The doctor looked at me keenly. He is fair and closely shaven, with pensive eyes, and a sad expression. He says simply:

"Then? . . . These bayonet wounds?"

I shrug my shoulders. The doctor understands. He makes a brusque gesture. The wounded man, who has just breathed his last, is carried away quickly. Alas! no one will ever know where this soldier rests! His family will look in vain for news of him. Stripped of everything that would have made his identity known, he is only a Frenchman who died for his endangered Fatherland, sleeping his last sleep in a piece of waste ground near the Hospital of Saint-M. . . . since October 15th of the great tragic year.

But my turn has come. They lift me carefully and lay me on the table. One orderly lays his hand over my eyes, to prevent me from seeing; the other cuts away the stiffened cloth and the leather of the boot with a pair of scissors, and the hideous wound is laid bare. Taking advantage of a moment of distraction I see it quite plainly. The bones protrude through the flesh below the knee; the calf is a shapeless pulp. The attendant presses back my forehead with a swift, imperative gesture. A cloth soaked in spirit is laid under my nostrils. And the delicate operation of cleansing the wound is performed quickly enough, though it seems a long business to me. Bits of bone fall into a metal basin under the table;

now and again there is a sharper sound; these are the fragments of steel that are taken from the wound. Finally I feel something that burns and tingles; tincture of iodine or spirit, no doubt. There is a smell of benzine.

Then they hold the leg tightly. The foot is drawn out carefully, turned round, put into a mould, an apparatus of cast iron. And the operation is over. It was quite bearable.

I ask the doctor whether they will be able to save my leg. He looks dubious.

"How soon shall I know?"

"In two or three days, I think. The wound is in a very unfortunate place."

"What projectile caused the wound?"

The doctor makes no reply. Turning to the orderly, who shrugs his shoulders, he says in German:

"*Sie wollen immer wissen.*" ("They always want to know.")

The orderly stoops over me. Perhaps he divined my thought.

"It was a *Granat*, monsieur."

Granat means a shell. I argue that the 77 was silent at the moment of the attack. It fired later, when I was already wounded.

"Oh, that doesn't matter," he replies. "It often happens so."

The doctor makes a sign of acquiescence

I am carried away again several stories higher. We come at last to a very large room with two rows of white beds.

October 17. *Nine o'clock.*—Yesterday I wrote two post cards. The German pastor who visits our ward promised to send them off for me.

The doctor comes in about eight o'clock. He lifts up the sheet that is laid over my leg, inspects the bandages, which are soaked with blood, and then, nodding his head, says:

"They will bring you downstairs at eleven o'clock. You will be put to sleep. If I can save your leg, I promise to do so. If not, I shall cut it off."

The announcement is brutal. But what use is it to protest? . . . It is true that I am in great pain. The wound seems to be a very serious one. . . .

I will pray to God earnestly . . .

October 18. *Morning.*—Well, now I am a cripple. I became aware of my misfortune yesterday when I awoke at noon. I was not fully conscious. But I put my hand down to feel the dressing. I have only one leg.

It is a painful sacrifice. . . . God help me to bear it bravely.

October 20. *Morning.*—Terrible fever.

Yesterday, temperature of 105°. I cannot sleep . . . I live in a miserable dream.

This morning the fever abated. A lady of the Red Cross Society, Madame S. . . ., a Frenchwoman, is very kind to me. She tells me I must not write, so I am scribbling in secret.

A young French *abbé* was here just now. He came to give the Sacrament to a dying man near me. A volunteer helper in the Medical Service, a young citizen of Metz, aged 17, assisted him in his task. How his face was irradiated as he presented the wafer ! . . . I have never seen such an expression of gentleness, joy, and love !

October 21.—My notebook and pencil are always within reach. I generally slip them under one of my pillows. I hear the guns. They never cease. At night there are volleys which make one hope too much. They seem to be close behind the Meuse, and the hospital is on the river-bank.

I occupy a bed near a window, on the left of the hospital. One can see the hill with the Roman Camp quite plainly from here. Not I, of course. I cannot move. It would be dangerous to raise myself in bed. Every day the fort is covered with shells and grape-shot. The Boches wanted to repair it and

make use of it. They have had to give up that idea, I am told.

I suffer more than I did yesterday.

October 23.—The fever has left me. I am extremely weak and often fall into a stupor. Madame S. . . . revives me by injections that smell strongly of camphor. I also take grog, provided by the brandy the doctors drink. They are quite amiable. Ours in particular, Herr F. . . ., is full of kindness and devotion. He is often in the wards till past midnight, dressing wounds.

I can't say as much of the orderlies. They do as little as they possibly can for us. They refuse to help the Sisters and the female staff. This morning one of them unbosomed himself thus in broken French:

"It's very unlucky: two wounded Germans, who were picked up at once, had each a leg amputated; *Kaput!* You, a Frenchman, a good-for-nothing, who had been lying out for a long time, amputated, and saved!"

The poor fellow is grieved to the heart! I laugh feebly. The good-for-nothing is well pleased.

October 25.—Nearly every evening now there are departures. All the French wounded who can bear the journey are sent to Metz. It seems that I am to go next.

The thought of this journey alarms me. I have got out of it twice, pleading exhaustion. The wards are almost empty. I am left alone in my corner, with a Provençal basket-maker at the other end. He seems to be seriously wounded.

Madame S. . . . is admirable. She arrives at daybreak, and does not leave the hospital till late in the evening. The doctors respect her, and call her " Sister " ; they rarely refuse her anything she asks for us.

She has a daughter living with her at Saint-M. . . ., and a little grandchild. Only yesterday they were in their home, a large house to the left of the Place du Grand Marché, that is to say, near the front. The shells were raining incessantly on that part of the town, and yesterday, while the ladies were breakfasting in the unvaulted cellar of their house, a French " 155 " came through the ceilings and exploded in the cellar. When the smoke cleared, the ladies got up. The child in its cot had escaped, and they themselves, as by a miracle, had only a few scratches. The mother and the grandmother rushed to the little creature and covered it with kisses ; they then made all haste, as may be supposed, to find a new shelter.

Since this, whenever she has a moment

during the hour of the siesta, Madame S. . . . crosses the danger zone of those streets, and goes to seek among the ruins of her home anything that may still be useful, or some souvenir that may have come to the surface. Brave heart! true Frenchwoman!

These "accidents"—as she calls them—do not seem to distress her. Just now she was showing us some shapeless fragments, shattered and twisted by the explosion, of her kitchen utensils. She laughed as she showed them; she laughed again when I tried to point out the risk she was running in her frequent visits to this corner of Saint-M. . . ., where the crash of bombs is heard perpetually.

October 27.—The automobiles from Metz have come again. It was about eight o'clock and very dark. I again pleaded my exhausted state, supported by Madame S. . . . However, it was agreed that this "transparent excuse" was to have no effect henceforth. The doctor made me understand this.

"The French don't want you! If the cannonade at night makes you hope that you may be taken and carried off by them some evening, you are mistaken, monsieur. Saint-M. . . . is in our hands, and we shall not give it up until you have destroyed it, which your gunners have been ordered not to do, it seems."

The reason is plain enough. There are too many French civilians in the town. We do not shed blood unnecessarily, and this is well. The Germans would not be so scrupulous in our place. However, I have gained a little time. And who knows! . . .

October 28.—About the 19th of this month, two days after the amputation of my leg, the doctor told me that Antwerp was taken. Antwerp, an impregnable city? . . . It seemed to me so grotesque, so arrogant, and so absurd that I would not enter this stupid piece of braggadocio in my notebook.

But it seems that it is true. Antwerp, under the infernal fire of the Austrian "305's" and the German "420's" was no more able to hold out than Liége and Namur. . . . The *abbé* confirms the news. I do not, however, augur very ill from the fact, for fortresses are but walls, and the combatant army is the essential thing.

Our orderlies, however, are more confident. According to them the fall of Verdun—it was to have been announced the next day, but this "next day" has already been going on since the 10th—will produce a moral effect of the utmost importance. The French will recognize that they must make peace. Nay, more, they will help the Germans to

free the West from the island scourge! And everything will then be for the best. . . .

I listen in silence. The Germans have no tact. They know nothing of that elementary reticence which, even in war, should lead us to respect our wounded enemies, our unwilling and therefore unhappy guests.

Other observations of a more material order made during the last few days in the ward have proved abundantly that moral delicacy, either of mind or heart, is totally lacking in these warriors. Thus some of the orderlies have lined their modest purses with French gold. One of them shows me his, a sort of leather pouch fastened with a cord, and containing nearly 2000 francs in 20- and 10-franc pieces. Among them was a Napoleon with the crown for 50 francs.

Was not this proof positive that only pillage could have procured this sum, perhaps the savings of some industrious workman or peasant? We know how the peasant treasures the gold pieces he amasses.

Of course I said nothing; but I heartily wished he might be taken prisoner by our troops, and made to expiate his theft, perhaps his crime, with all the severity enjoined by our law.

October 29. *Five o'clock.*—The motors

again. This time there is no getting off. I am officially designated.

I look curiously at the little yellowish label with red indented edges which has been fastened to my neck. I turn it over in my fingers, and my surprise and stupefaction are unutterable. I read these words, written in ink: "*To be watched, very dangerous.*"

In vain do I examine myself; I can think of nothing which justifies their fears. I have kept my impressions to myself ever since my arrival. Then I suddenly recall that brief scene in the operating-room, on October 16th. Had the doctor heard of it? Has he heard since of the tragic sight I involuntarily witnessed. . . . But what could this matter? . . . Are they afraid I shall speak? Am I in a position to do so? I should run a great risk for very little. . . . The warning is enough. I will be careful.

Same day, 7 p.m.—The French guns have ceased roaring. I am in deep distress. To go to Germany, to leave the soil of France, trodden under foot by the enemy, it is true, but still speaking to us so eloquently of our Fatherland, causes me great grief. I am going into the unknown and the thought is painful.

I no longer think of the danger we are in from the shells. I think of victory. And I say to

myself that it is all over for me now. I shall no longer hear the fusillades that have sounded in my ears these October nights, when, raising myself on my elbows, I have listened tensely to the reply of our guns to the German mortars, beyond the shadows that lay over the sleeping town. I must leave the soil watered by my blood, obey my German jailers, and await farther off—in what hospital, under what skies ?—the tidings of a great battle that shall deliver us.

I feel sad and lonely. Shall I have news of my beloved ones. Will they be able to write to me, and receive my letters ? My dear ones seem to gather round my bed at this parting hour. I see them and speak to them. Agnes bends her head and her weeping eyes towards me.

Alas ! my heart is weak ! I pull myself together. My father's parting words, murmured in my ear as I bid him good-bye, sound in my memory : " God will protect you." A fervent prayer rises to my lips. And I am calm again, peace steals into my heart. When I pass into this darkness, He will be my light. I commit my cause to the defender of the helpless. He will preserve me from rebellion and despair. He will give me patience, prudence, and faith to enable me to bear

suffering and exile with dignity and without anger.

October 30. *Morning.*—Château de Saint-Benoît. In the grand reception-room, transformed into a dormitory.

Straw mattresses stained with blood are ranged in several long rows. The furniture has all been removed, save a huge china stove with brass bands, which towers at the end of the room. I have been laid in a corner. V. . . ., the basket-maker from Nice, lies in the middle, near a German trooper wounded in the forearm. A dying man near me struggles for breath.

A young pastor from Königsberg sat down beside me just now. He is fair and youthful-looking, and closely shaved. He speaks French slowly and haltingly, but very correctly.

"That doctor you see there"—he points—"is very famous in Germany. He is a man of great talent. He was in Turkey for a long time, as doctor to the Sultan Abdul Hamid."

This doctor is a man of middle age, also closely shaved; he wears grey like the rest and the yellow boots of a Prussian officer. He has an expensive cigar between his teeth. He has piercing eyes, and a general air of alertness.

He comes up to us, and puts a few brief, rapid questions :

" Where wounded ? . . . In what part ? . . . How ? . . . Leg amputated at once ? "

I answer in the same manner.

" Would you like a little morphia ? "

He explains to the young pastor that he could have saved my leg if he had been there. Technical explanations. Then a sudden decision :

" Saint-M. . . . I will go and see about it to-morrow ; there is too much slashing there ; I must inquire into this business."

He has gone. I am alone. The pastor is now beside V. . . . What a lot of going and coming ! A morphia injection which they gave me before starting yesterday prevents me from suffering. It also made me take little note of the road we travelled. I was in a vague, cloudy, beneficent dream.

III. AT THE LEHRERSEMINAR OF MONTIGNY-LES-METZ

The same day. Montigny-les-Metz.—Started this morning at nine o'clock in cold, misty weather. When we emerged from an avenue of ancient trees, walnuts apparently, the plain stretched out grey and naked before us. There must have been some fighting here. Ruined walls on the right, a few felled trees, fragments of vehicles, and then, farther off in the fields, regular excavations bear witness to the drama.

V. . . . is beside me. I am able to raise myself on my elbow for a moment, when we go through the villages. Alas! what desolation! On every side blackened walls pierced by projectiles innumerable, and charred beams. Not a house intact. The church towers are gone. Here and there near the doors, which are broken in or torn from their hinges, German infantrymen watch our automobile pass. Behind a fence, the only one still standing in a field of lucerne, are a few heads of horned cattle. The road is all broken up. Our vehicle trembles, leaps in the ruts, pitches like a ship in distress. And we are lying

on the floor, without support of any kind, on two centimetres of straw.

I look about me all the time. It is one way of forgetting one's pain. . . . Here are some defence works round deserted ruins, for there was once a village here. Sinister cross-roads, defended by four or five rows of barbed wire. Zigzag trenches, little forts, communication trenches. Right and left to the rear, innumerable other trenches, empty for the moment.

Provision has been made for retreat. Like a boar making a stand, the Barbarian as he recoils will be able to take breath, and make the French pay dearly for the recapture of territory usurped for how many months? No tillers of the soil are to be seen. But there are huge convoys, herds of cattle on the march, artillery and wagons. . . .

We are stopped presently. A haughty officer on horseback, approaching the vehicle, tries to distinguish us. There is a large farm on the left, still intact, and its old loopholed walls, standing on a piece of rising ground, seem to bid defiance to assault.

We continue our journey. Trenches all the way. Groups of civilians work unceasingly, directed, or perhaps guarded, by armed soldiers. The road descends now. It seems to be

better. We are approaching Metz. We halt for a few seconds. The two leather curtains which had been flapping in the wind, allowing us to see the country as we passed, are now closely drawn. And we start again at a brisk pace. The sound of conversation suggests a street, and we feel that special vibration of wheels passing over a paved surface. Again there is silence emphasized by the steady throb of the motor. Then a metallic reverberation. We are passing over or under a bridge. The speed slackens. The chauffeur exchanges greetings with passers-by, friends, no doubt soldiers. The automobile stops, hoots noisily for a few seconds, then turns slowly off the road, and crosses a kerb, for a sudden jerk throws me upon V. . . . Finally we stop dead.

An electric bell rings incessantly. Footsteps are heard. The leather curtains are drawn back. Straps creak in their buckles. The door is opened. We see a flock of orderlies in white, most of them bareheaded. A non-commissioned officer with a grey moustache asks me in French :

" How are you wounded ? "

" Right leg amputated."

He nods in silence.

" How long ago ? "

"Thirteen or fourteen days."

"Where?"

"At Saint-M. . . ."

He tells the orderlies to be careful, and they lay hold of me.

V. . . . is on a stretcher. Another stretcher stands beside the ambulance. I am soon upon it. My overcoat has fallen back, showing my horrible wound. And now a child, whom I had not seen from the vehicle, approaches, holding the hand of an officer in uniform, his father, I suppose. His childish eyes examine me. Is it curiosity? Are the features of an enemy to be graven on his memory? With a pretty gesture, full of childish grace, he lifts the skirt of my coat, and lays it carefully over my body. The father stands impassive behind the boy. I try to say "Thank you," but my throat contracts. I give the military salute, and the child returns it, pressing his little hand against the edge of his blue cap.

I am in bed at last. V. . . . is beside me. They set an earthen bowl in front of us, containing a little broth. It smells of maggi, and is not very appetizing. V. . . . examines it for a long time, stirring up something which looks very much like bird-seed. I swallow mine without looking at it or

tasting it. I am very weary and I was very hungry.

Our ward is small but very light. There are only nine beds, and two large windows give light and fresh air. We have electric light and central heating. The woodwork is white, so are the iron bedsteads and the doors. . . . I feel drowsy. I cease to answer remarks. I sleep for three hours, soundly and sweetly.

Then an orderly wakes me. Certain formalities ensue. Name, age, profession, company, regiment. A pot-bellied corporal is busy rallying two poor fellows with all the heaviness of his race. They are crippled with acute rheumatism, but the absence of wounds has roused his suspicions. Perhaps this is a ruse? . . . The spying German has a holy horror of spies. But their story is simple enough. They were in hospital at Saint-M. . . . when the town was taken, and could not get away. One fine evening, German doctors arrived in their ward. All the other patients had been removed, but these two, who were half paralysed, had been left. Their distress may be imagined. One, who bore a German name, was of course suspect. The other, an octroi official in a southern town, had undoubtedly the most fiery and irritable temper

ever inflicted on a mortal. Hence many troubles, as may be supposed.

Just at the moment his contracted features and furious glances alarmed me. Would he be able to control himself? To make a diversion, I became amiable. I addressed the non-commissioned officer in my best German. He was surprised and delighted.

"You speak German?"

"*Ganz klein wenig.*" ("Just a very little.")

A very little, but still a little, and this suffices to avert the storm from our comrades.

November 2.—The life here is calm and regular. Montigny is close to Metz. There are two hospitals here: one, where we are, is the Lehrerseminar (Catholic Training College for Lorraine teachers), and has accommodation for 600 wounded; the second (I do not know what it is called), a little farther from the city, is even more important. But all the French wounded are here. A few are sent in the first instance to Metz—where there are twenty-two war hospitals—but after a few days they come on to Montigny-les-Metz. The *abbé* gives me these details.

As I say, the life here is calm and regular. This is the time-table. We are called in the morning at 7. We have basins to wash in, and these are filled with water by the more robust

among us. We then perform our toilets, and *café au lait* is served. At 9 o'clock there is broth, and, for some, milk food. About 10 o'clock the doctor comes round; after this, wounds are dressed. At 11, a meal: a bowl of soup, nearly always the same; then the ration —not very good—a little tinned meat or smoked bacon. Siesta till 3 P.M. At 3, *café au lait*, and milk food for some. About 5, the doctor makes his round again; at 6, soup as above. The bread is pretty bad. We have been warned that it will soon contain a variety of substances: bran, potatoes, etc. For the moment it is eatable, and we get a pound a day.

As I only arrived yesterday, it is too soon for me to record my opinion of things. But my first impression is favourable. They leave us in peace. The general organization seems to be first rate: the orderlies well disciplined, the service regular, things, hours, and persons punctual and unvarying.

November 3.—The Inspector comes to see us. He tells us at once that Young Turkey has been enticed by Germany into the conflict. The only result, as far as I can see, will be to hamper our Allies the Russians a little. But perhaps this is all the Germans expect. I am not much perturbed.

The Inspector seems confident of the success of German arms. I argue quietly with him. He does not get angry. He is a man of about forty, with a refined face, and more of the Latin about him, even in his walk, than of the heavy German. He tells me that he has brothers holding official positions in the North of France. Nevertheless, he is a true Boche in mind and heart. German victory seems to him necessary to arrest our decadence.

"Such a business as that ignominious lawsuit," he says confidentially, "could not happen in our country."

He alludes, no doubt, to a recent scandal, too recent to be forgotten, which had its epilogue a few days before the outbreak of war. I protest energetically.

"You must not confound France with that crew."

And how can they presume to talk of their superior morality! The name of Eulenburg rises involuntarily to my lips. The Inspector starts. He looks round anxiously to see if any orderly is near enough to have heard me. Then he says rapidly:

"Never utter that name here. I say this in your own interest."

I take the hint thus given. But I am pleased to have produced such an effect.

November 4.—We may write as often as we like, several letters a day if we wish. The Inspector tells me so himself.

"We are not barbarians."

I smile. There is, certainly, no connexion between all the acts committed on the field of battle and the man now speaking to me. But are the facts, which I saw with my own eyes, any the less real on this account?

I have written several letters. It will take twenty days to get an answer. I must wait patiently.

November 5.—I am not so exhausted as I was. I do not sleep much at night. But I no longer suffer much.

To-day I questioned the doctor as to the approaching date of my operation; for they have told me that it will be necessary to shorten the femur, which was left too long at Saint-M. . . .

"Not yet," he replies. "There is no hurry."

Perhaps he is joking. But this answer depresses me greatly. I have been at Montigny now for six days, and my dressing has not been changed. What are they waiting for to verify the condition of my wound?

This doctor, be it said, is wonderful! He has a way of making his round which is

unique, to say the least of it. He comes in, followed by the sergeant (the *Unteroffizier*, which is equivalent to Corporal in our beloved army), stops on the threshold, points with his finger to each patient, then, with clock-like precision, utters the word, "*Gut*" ("All right"), turns on his heel, and goes off to another ward. The visit is at an end.

November 7.—The staff is good-natured enough, relatively speaking. So far there has been nothing to complain of. The head doctor is pleasant to us, and the discipline is so good that all the orderlies imitate him. The Director of the Seminary, too, a volunteer administrative officer for the duration of the war, visits the wards every day. He is the treasurer, or perhaps I should rather say the steward. He speaks very good French. One thing is remarkable and attractive in him; whereas the Inspector, who is younger and more impetuous, brings forward his German opinions incessantly, and talks of the war as a hardened Boche, the Director, an older man, speaks of it very little, or not at all. He shows a tact and delicacy that surprise me. His wife is the head nurse; she is a fair-haired German, with a smiling, rosy face and a gentle voice. They have several children, and I caught a glimpse one day of the youngest, a

sweet little girl, with the two classic plaits hanging down her back.

I may also mention Herr R. . . ., an old volunteer non-commissioned officer, quite sixty years old, generally told off to deal with those who, like myself, speak the trans-Rhenish tongue but little, or badly, on account of his very clear pronunciation, and his slow, sonorous voice.

November 8.—Saw the German pastor. He was shaking hands with the *abbé* on the threshold of the ward. He is a reddish fair man of middle age, very hairy, his eyes rather dull behind his gold-rimmed spectacles. We talked for a few minutes. I asked, of course, about the distant cannonade we had been hearing since yesterday.

"Yes, Saint-Quentin is over there; but the firing you hear on the left is not there. They are only testing guns. We are a long way from the front."

To sound him a little—he is a pastor of this neighbourhood—I remark quietly that this pretty country might suffer a good deal if the French were to bombard it.

"The French?"

Stupefaction cuts him short; he manifests such ingenuous astonishment at the thought of such an incredible thing as Metz bombarded,

a German fortress the prey of the cannon, that I am delighted beyond measure.

Germany vanquished, downtrodden, humiliated, paying ransom in her turn!

You do not believe this to be possible, Herr Pastor. But I am quite certain of it. It will take a long time, perhaps, but it will come all the same.

November 10.—This morning I saw the head doctor, a South German; he is a dark-haired man, slightly built, and very sparing of speech. It is reported in the hospital that his two brothers, officers, were killed in the first encounters near Bertrix, and that he himself found their bodies on the battle-field, horribly mutilated.

I feel very doubtful as to the truth of this story, although certain words dropped by the head doctor seem to confirm it. Inspector D. . . ., who follows him about like his shadow, has also shown me some French newspapers, in which imprudent reporters celebrate such achievements on the part of our Senegalese troops with reprehensible levity. But I am not convinced. The behaviour of the head doctor is quite incompatible with the story. He is kind and very just to the French wounded. He grants them favours at once when they ask him. Thus, those

among us who are not very seriously wounded complained of want of exercise, and of the monotony of their days in the wards. He gave them leave to walk every day for an hour. They take this exercise in the court-yard, severely guarded by a soldier armed with a rifle. Others complained of the notorious insufficiency of the hospital rations. The doctor gave them permission to supplement it, and chocolate, sugar, sweetmeats, and even rolls were added to the menu of the hungrier among us, whose purses were sufficiently well lined to allow of these luxuries.

Tobacco was another item in question. Can one imagine soldiers unable to smoke? The head doctor fixed certain hours: the hour of the daily exercise for one, and then one hour in the morning and one in the evening. Leave was given to smoke in the passage. But we smoked everywhere, and to excess; in the wards, and in short everywhere rather than in the passage. Were those who are confined to their beds to be deprived of a smoke? . . . I, alas, am of the number, and I decided the question in defiance of the rule!

To tell the truth, I feel uneasy. All this calm makes me anxious. I do not understand the reason of this amiability: are the Boches mollified by frequent and substantial

successes, presaging enormous advantages, and so inclining them to show indulgence to the vanquished? If so I should prefer to suffer! . . . I do not want their kindness if we are to be beaten.

Come, no blasphemy! It is simply impossible! I am like the red-haired pastor; the very thought seems scandalous.

November 14.—No, it did not last. There is storm in the air. The orderlies are less amiable. They no longer talk as they attend to us. They used to gossip, and it helped to pass the time. Now they speak only to each other in low tones in the passages.

I have no more visitors. Even the Director merely bows and passes by when his duties bring him within reach of me. There are no more of those conversations in which I strove to discover the soul of the Boche. I know not what to think.

The old Lorraine Sisters who speak French pass like shadows. They used to talk to us in pure rhythmical phrases that cheered us. Inspector D. . . . is invisible.

The head doctor himself becomes inscrutable. He drapes himself in a cloth cloak, and moves about indefatigably, followed by his *Feldwebel*, the black scabbard of his sword dangling against his short legs, without a word for

any one. Something is hanging over us, but what? . . . No one knows.

November 17.—A very great joy alleviates my distress. The first letter has come, the one I was expecting and hoped would be the first, bearing the post-mark of Mauvezin, in Le Gers. It is from my wife, a short, brave letter. Not a word of regret, of weakness, or of complaint, but a mournful pride, deep, true words.

Blessed be our dear ones! They are our healers, the physicians of the soul. And the soul is so sad in exile.

November 19.—For the last two days my neighbour has been a Parisian schoolmaster, Sergeant X. . . ., wounded in the legs. He makes satisfactory progress. We talk for hours together quite freely.

A German schoolmaster, whose brother is detained at R. . . . as a hostage, comes to see us occasionally. He gives us details as to education in Lorraine. There the teachers may be either Catholic or Protestant. The system is that created in France by the famous Falloux law, which decreed that pupils were to have teachers of the Catholic or of the Reformed Faith, according to their religion.

"This would be a difficult problem," he said

casually, "if France should ever re-take the province, which I think highly improbable."

The methods of instruction are not quite the same as those adopted by us. As regards the classes, the Germans have instituted a very interesting process. The master has his pupils allotted to him when they leave the infant schools, and keeps them to the end of their time, when they are about fourteen. Thus he has time to study them, to make use of the varied methods suitable to different cases, and to mould these youthful minds himself exclusively. The Germans have recognized the danger of changing masters and classes for the pupils in their schools about every two years. I note the information for what it is worth. The system seems attractive. But circumstances alter cases.

Inspector D. . . . has also taken it into his head to convert my friend X. . . . To convert is an imposing word, but it is the right one. The Inspector is a zealot. The schoolmaster is not. X. . . ., a man of an open mind and a broad and tolerant spirit, reproaches the German religion preached by the Inspector, of delighting in war, regardless of the divine precept of the Prince of Peace. The Inspector, evading the point, descants on the "vices" of France, the general scepticism that obtains

in the country. According to him, this war is a threat, a warning from the Most High to the France of yesterday, and also a chastisement for all her misdeeds.

"But what has Germany to do with that?"

X. . . . will not admit the argument for a moment. What claim has modern Germany, the advocate of brute force, to consider herself the elect of God, the instrument chosen by that God to punish a guilty France? How can a Catholic speak thus? Has he really forgotten that France is very Catholic? . . . I in my turn suggest that reservations are necessary. The subject is a very delicate one. And then, as my God, the God of devout Frenchmen, is, according to the Scriptures, the God of love, desiring not the death of the sinner, it would be surprising indeed if He should have let loose this war.

The Inspector considers. He is embarrassed. Nevertheless, he combats my argument.

"I thought you were a good Christian! I gathered so from your letters."

In fact, this is quite a little scandal! I, who talk so politely to the priest and the pastor! He does not know me, or he would understand that my somewhat chilly politeness is often ironical, especially when it encounters booted and helmeted pastors, or fulminating

priests, who, in spite of their gold spectacles, look to me more like soldiers than friends of the disinherited.

And then I am bound to admit that the German religion seems to me extraordinary. I foresee that I shall have to discuss it again later on, when I have had more experience, and above all, more knowledge of the German mind, which seems to me very complex. To-day I will confine myself to a single impression: the German's *Gott mit uns* is no empty phrase; it is a fact, a symbol. If I had read *Uns mit Gott*, I might have been reassured. But, alas! refusing to walk in His ways, they have ordained that the Eternal Father should follow His children into battle. And the difference is immense. "To be with God" is to be good, or at least to desire to be so. To take God as our witness, to cry "God with us," is to legitimize many evil things, and to mingle religion with human actions which even mere morality strongly condemns.

November 20.—Just now the little *Bruder*, dressed in his cassock, came into the ward.

He is a scholar at the Lehrerseminar, a future schoolmaster who does not love France. His curt speech and his dozen words of French are very amusing.

He announces first of all that we are for-

bidden to write letters every day; we may do so twice a week. The new head doctor has given this order. Just as he is going out the smell of tobacco calls him back. He snuffs the air, then in grave and humble accents he says, holding up his finger:

"Of course, you do not *dare* to smoke here?"

The phrase is delightful. It is symptomatic of German mentality. An entire system of education is implicit in these words: "You do not *dare* to smoke." It does not mean: "Smoking is forbidden." That would be too simple. It means more especially: "You ought not to and cannot have any idea of smoking, for you know it is forbidden."

We all understand the difference. And that difference is a whole world.

November 21.—New restrictions concerning the writing of letters; now we are limited to a single letter at a time. Our food was bad, but we had got used to it; a healthy stomach can digest bran. It is suddenly reduced. The ration of bread is diminished. And there are to be no purchases in the town. We are subjected to a sly, severe, meddlesome surveillance. Our lockers are searched nearly every day. We are forbidden to receive parcels of food from France. We are to inform our families. But the notice is rather

belated. Many of us, sad to say, have parcels on the way to us. Will they be given to us? We are not left long in suspense. The addressees are given the brown paper or the canvas in which their provisions were packed. Then they have to pay the exorbitant rate of 80 pfennige per kilogramme of preserves or chocolate. And the contents are confiscated. Chocolate, sweets, biscuits, and sugar go to unknown hands. "They are gracious gifts which the French wounded present to their German friends!" says the Boche *abbé*.

Finally, the absurd order is given that we are no longer to see the *Gazette de Lorraine*, a special edition in harsh French hitherto allowed us. And yet this paper was ignoble enough! What stupid insults it showered on good Frenchmen! The occasional supplement of an important German daily, it was a receptacle for all the absurd, malicious, or idiotic rumours current about France! The articles are anonymous; they were thoroughly German in tone. We shall not lose much.

But this restriction is accompanied by one more serious: no more French books, novels, or studies; no German dictionaries, nor old periodicals, the pictures in which amused the wounded. We are prisoners. Now prison

means silence, cold solitude. To read is to think. To read about France, even abuse of France, is to excite our latent tenderness, to fan the embers of a smouldering enthusiasm. The shadow of Germany interposes between us and our favourite writers. I had *Le Démon du Midi*, Bourget's grave and deeply interesting book, overflowing with passion, and yet so devout. It was seized. And I had to conceal my notes, to hide them in my bed.

Some white paper in my drawer attracts attention. The Prussian soldier is exasperated.

"Where did this paper come from? . . . What is it for?"

"To study German."

My answer is calm. His overflows with hatred.

"You will have plenty of time to learn it when it is spoken in your vile country."

I answer: "Never." He shakes his fist over my bed; then he begins to laugh, an insulting, brutal laugh. I am as white as a sheet. The ruffian goes off. But I cried with rage.

Oh! what it is to be a helpless log, lying in this bed of pain, upon these blood-stained coverings, and not to be able to strike out at that barbarian's brow, and cram his insults down his throat!

November 23.—I have written nothing for two days. I was too much upset and too strictly watched also.

I now know the author of our miseries; we have a new head doctor: Doctor Orth, an officer with three stripes. It is he who has made a clean sweep. All natives of Lorraine are suspect in his eyes. We were so imprudent as to write to our families that we were well looked after, and kindly treated. And the censor was ill-pleased. French prisoners comfortable in Germany, and in Lorraine, at Metz!

I was told these details. The ex-head doctor was punished. Three weeks under arrest for acting with weakness. Weakness means humanity. And this explains his big military cloak and the sword that dangled against his short legs. One of our comrades also made a fatal mistake. Finding that the Inspector collects stamps, he wrote home to M. . . . where his wife is living, to get a few. The Inspector knew nothing about it. But he had to suffer. The censor stopped the letter. He was accused of having entered into suspicious relations with prisoners, and court-martialed.

Thenceforth, no more letters were allowed. Our correspondence accumulated on the head

doctor's great bureau—both incoming and outgoing mails. Nothing is forwarded. Doctor Orth will read for himself. He knows very little French, too little to be able to read quickly, and to be sure that he has understood. Every evening he sits down with a dictionary and translates haphazard. When our professor is puzzled by a sentence, he copies out the passage, and throws the letter into the waste-paper basket. What is it to him that mothers, wives, and sisters should undergo the anguish and terrors of suspense? . . . Some of the wounded are in desperate case. Death may claim them at any moment. And when the door opens, their fixed and dying eyes, full of distress, look out eagerly. Oh! to have a letter! To hold in one's hand the paper on which the dear familiar writing has traced loving words which a friend will read to you!

Doctor Orth has no heart. Shall I give you his portrait? He is a tall man, about six feet, with broad, stooping shoulders. Across the cheek of his clean-shaven face, running from the right ear, are pink scars, mementoes of his duelling days. He has uneasy, suspicious eyes, and restless hands. He is the perfect type of the Prussian officer prone to brutal deeds, practised in actions that no good

reason justifies. It is the human machine without polish or finish. Doctor Orth talks very little. But he listens. And meanwhile he pries under the table, in the folds of garments, under the edges of sheets or beneath a crumpled bolster, seeking tobacco or forbidden books. His fingers are like claws. They are skilful in discovering in the depths of a purse the few illicit pfennige in excess of the prescribed amount. (The French wounded are allowed to possess three marks). Woe to the unlucky wight who is detected infringing this rule! He is sent to prison, no matter what his wound may be.

Doctor Orth is diabolical. He has a regular genius for evil inventions and discoveries, and for unjustifiable punishments. Perhaps you are rather hungry, after a very meagre dinner. You hope to do better in the evening. But Doctor Orth has his eye on you. He goes to the kitchens, gives his orders, and instead of the expected soup, the wounded have to satisfy their hunger with a bowl of tea and nothing more. They will sleep all the better, of course!

And it was he who declared to me this morning with the disdainful air of the conqueror: "We owe you merely your lives, nothing more. And even this is a concession on our part."

November 24.—After prohibition comes confiscation. A search was instituted this morning, by order. We had some post cards, for which we had paid exorbitant prices. They were taken from our hands. The brutal measure was carried out without resistance, clamour, or protest. Our tobacco shared the same fate.

Farewell to our golden cigarettes. Our fragrant pipes are broken.

November 30.—We were in hell. We were only roasted; but now we are to be cut up. The doctor spoke to me when he went his round. I had promised myself that I would not ask again when my operation was to take place. So it was he who informed me.

"It will perhaps be to-morrow. Yesterday and to-day, too much work."

I make a gesture of inquiry, and this is his answer: "Your doctors in France are amputating the limbs of our German soldiers just as they please. We have letters to prove it. So we have orders to amputate without hesitation any injured limbs by way of reprisal. We are not to try and save any."

They have done as they said. There is an endless procession of stretchers through the corridors, and we catch glimpses of blanched

faces. How many victims? . . . It is difficult to say precisely; I am a fixture in my room, and cannot verify the numbers. But truly Germany has reason to be proud of her *Kultur*, her moral superiority!

December 1.—I am to be operated on this evening. But I am not much distressed. Still, I am writing to my family, for with these brutes one can never tell. . . .

If this operation should prove fatal, they will at least know my last thought, and how dearly I love them. And how I love France! She seems to me loftier, more sublime than ever. Which among us could say that he really knew her? Which of us has given her all he owed her, all the Great Mother has a right to expect.

Oh! my friends in the trenches, soldiers of twenty or thirty, give your blood without counting the cost. Battle for victory. Here, under the knife that tortures our flesh, we will suffer without complaining and we will be worthy of you. We dedicate our pain and our fever to you and to France, for we have nothing else to offer. And this is poor and useless; it lacks grandeur.

December 2.—I was operated on last evening at five o'clock. Suffered horribly when I became conscious.

What was the operation they performed? Why was the surgeon not present?

December 3.—Fever still very high. I cannot move. There is some news which both rejoices and depresses me. The Lehrerseminar is to be evacuated to-day. Good-bye, Doctor Orth. The war-hospital is to be reserved for typhus patients. . . . I dread the journey on the ambulance in the state I am in, and so soon now. . . . I commit myself to God.

IV. CRUEL HOURS; SAN KLEMENS

The same day.—Arrived at San Klemens a few minutes ago. Exhausted by fever. I need not have feared the journey. Merely a question of will. I should like to have my wound dressed to ease the burning.

December 5.—The dressing very painful. I saw the wound. It looks horrible. The bone sawed half through. The upper part is in the shape of a V. There are pieces broken away at the sides, and fragments of bone left in the wound. It cannot have been cleaned after the operation. The tincture of iodine gives it a most gruesome appearance. The young doctor who attends me—about twenty-five, with a refined face, and deep, almost gentle eyes—seems rather surprised. He questions me briefly:

"Who did this? . . . Was it in a field hospital? No? . . . At Montigny? . . . When? . . .

I answer simply. I held up the leg myself without any help. The wound was washed with benzine. This on the burns made by the

iodine is hideously painful. The forceps probe the flesh. Another doctor comes. The operator speaks to him, but I do not understand what they say. The older man, however, seems to shrug his shoulders. It is over at last, and I am in bed again.

Alas! my mind is confused. Some vague danger seems to threaten me. But I was cured, the wound seemed to be healing. There was no more suppuration. Why and how did I get this wound, much larger than the former one? The doctor said they were only going to shorten the bone. So why are there these fragments of bone, and these splinters in the flesh? Suddenly, I am afraid to understand. . . . Forgotten details come back to my memory; *he* would not operate, and kept on putting off. I remember his rage when the Director caused the intervention of the head doctor about November 15. And the sinister words: "Why are you in such a hurry? You are foolish."

An accusation rises in my mind, clear and precise. Why was not the surgeon present at the moment of the operation? . . . Imprudence? Ignorance? Oh, a Prussian doctor never makes a mistake! Then, then . . . What am I to think? Deliberate cruelty? A desire to strike through

the helpless flesh at the "unconquerable soul"?

I know not. The man was capable of this, since he is a German. He has but the conscience left him by a narrow education in abnormal surroundings.

December 7.—I have read over the preceding lines carefully, and I can retract nothing. At the same time, I am filled with wonder at the coincidence which removed me from the hands of the criminal when my life was endangered by mutilation. How would he have treated me subsequently?

God is good. God is great and merciful; and His ways are inscrutable.

December 12.—I am still in great pain. But the fever is abating. The wound was dressed again this morning. I guessed rightly. The bone was broken off rather than sawed.

December 14.—We have as doctors a youthful student, Herr K. . . ., and a senior, not very much older, Doctor W. . . . He appears very indifferent. The former is more sympathetic. He seems dissatisfied with the state of my wound. "We shall see what happens in a day or two," he says. Am I in danger, then? I cannot sleep.

December 15.—With the exception of two or three wards, originally the dormitories of this

important seminary, San Klemens is dark, gloomy, dirty, and smoke-grimed. My ward especially, with its dozen beds, is very low. Its windows look out on a distant corner of a street, and on a small courtyard. To the right of my bed—I occupy the second, at the end of the room—there is another window, looking on to some old houses. It is all very dark. But some big branches rise from the courtyard opposite; an old chestnut-tree grows there. It stretches out bare arms under a veil of snow, and attracts my eyes on moonlight nights!

December 16.—Cruel, revolting scene. In one of the adjoining wards, M. . . ., a charming fellow, a Southerner, whose leg had been amputated like mine, was being brought back after having his wound dressed. The two orderlies who were carrying him shook the stretcher roughly. They raced like lunatics through the passages, and the unhappy patient begged them to be careful. His operation was quite recent, and he dreaded hæmorrhage. But the orderlies paid no attention to what he said. They tossed the limp, mutilated body higher still, a living, suffering ball.

And they pursue this method systematically, and soon apply it on a large scale, regardless of any one. The dressing hour becomes an ob-

session, a haunting dread of the cruel moment to be endured.

December 17.—Still no letters. We are only allowed to write once a week here. But Doctor Orth is still in power. Our families will not have our new address for fifteen or twenty days. Until then, our mails will arrive at Montigny—and remain there! There has been no distribution of letters for nearly twenty days.

My fever is abating. But not my sufferings.

December 18.—Chloroformed to-day. The doctor says I am out of danger.

But it will be necessary to cut the bone again.

No, thank you, Herr K. . . . I appreciate the honour, I assure you. But twice is enough.

December 19.—Again they urged me to submit to another operation. I answered: "In France." For, in fact, there is talk of a possible interchange of prisoners who have lost a limb, and of the unfit in general. All the belligerents are to be approached by Switzerland. Germany has consented.

The prospect excites us. But it is too good to be true, and none of us reckon upon it. However, a list was drawn up yesterday, and my name was on it.

December 20.—We get no news at all. True, I occasionally read the German papers. The vile publication already mentioned—*Gazette de Lorraine*—is now permitted. But we are all very suspicious of it. Knowing that it is the habit of the German jailers to flood hospitals and camps with depressing news, we are all silent.

In vain does the chaplain whisper ambiguous words in our ears; no one encourages him to talk. Besides, he is not a native of Lorraine. He is a pure German, a former missionary in the Congo. His eyes are screened by the eternal spectacles. He wears the classic costume: the black frock-coat—"a world too wide" for him. One of his visits to our ward is highly amusing. He pads softly towards a bed:

"Well! . . . Well! . . . Getting on all right?"

Then he laughs; a strange laugh, at once distinct and smothered. The same performance takes place at each bed. Not one word of true feeling. Nothing that comes from the heart, or reminds these suffering souls of God. Not the faintest exhortation to prayer. Now Christmas is close at hand. Who will confess, communicate, fulfil his duties as a Christian, if he invites no one to confide the task to

him ? But he is blind and deaf ; and always that irritating laugh.

All the wounded have taken a dislike to him. His rare phrases are so strange, there is something so unexpected about them, that many imagine him to be more dangerous than he is ; they think he has been put among us to feign stupidity, and carry tales of what we have said to him. I thought this at first. But this was going too far. He is natural ; he is himself. He suggests a disquieting view of German religion. On Sundays, this calm and peaceable person preaches the thrice holy war against the invader (!). He makes use of terrible phrases justifying massacre, and representing Germany, gentle as a lamb, at grips with the barbarians (!), the accursed violators of German liberty, its impure destroyers.

And this is more than enough to excuse what I have written. Far be it from me to insult the majesty of Faith. The priest is sacred to me. I am too sincere a Christian not to respect every form of belief. But those I have just mentioned will have no right to the noble name of God's servants until their acts, their words, and their gestures no longer contradict the sublime precepts of Him they dare to invoke.

December 23.—A few lines in the newspapers betray the uneasiness of the German Government at Russian advances. Austria seems helpless, and certain discreet reproaches are interwoven with proposals to send reinforcements to the brave ally, who appears to be in great difficulties.

I have told the news to my comrades. Their joy is great, not to say exuberant. All are full of confidence in our final success.

December 25.—Christmas Day, cold and foggy. The Germans are in great spirits. According to them, their troops have had some slight successes in East Prussia. They celebrate these by drinking brandy.

The hospital is silent. Save the sentries on guard and the orderlies on duty, there are no Germans in the wards. The former stay in the courts, and the latter merely look in every now and then, and go off again to forgather in their room. Hence there is a general sense of ease among us. Convalescents come in to pay us a visit. Friends who had been separated in the charge meet again. Similar questions and answers are exchanged :

" Where did you fall ? "

" Near the hedge, at the end of the field."

" Were you brought in at once ? "

" Oh ! well . . . not for nine days."

It is a solemn sight! . . . Smooth-faced lads and bearded men, they defile before me, the few survivors of the fights that took place in August and the early days of September. Falling in the Prussian lines, trampled under foot by the hostile hordes, left on the field for dead by patrols, witnesses of cruelties unspeakable, they escaped as by a miracle from the fate of so many brave men. Nearly all of them have lost a limb; one his right arm, the majority a leg; two are blind. They speak calmly, however. We can guess what they have suffered, but they do not talk of it. Are they very unhappy? I suppose so, but it would be idle to ask them. They will bear their sorrowful captivity without complaining; they will be brave and serious as on the days of attack, and later, here, in the hands of the German torturers. And the sight of them warms my heart and rejoices my eyes. This was my first contact with the diverse and fluctuating crowd of French prisoners. Not having been able to leave my ward, I have only seen them on the days when my wound was dressed, and I was carried on my stretcher into their larger and lighter wards. They had struck me as taciturn and rather depressed. This grieved me, I must confess, and made me anxious to get well soon,

and mingle with the quiet groups, to revive their flagging faith, the marvellous and sublime faith in final victory after all their trials. I was wrong, it seems. And I rejoice greatly.

O France, all blessings on thee! Thy sons are heroes who are not cast down by suffering. They are ennobled by it.

. . . A Christmas-tree has been lighted up in the room above us. Our meal was meagre, but the head doctor had ordered a cake in addition. I think of past Christmas Days, of my early childhood. I think of recent ones, spent with my beloved wife. I muse over those of the future. When will all peoples, those of our France, those of Russia and of England, the valiant nation of Belgium, aye, and even the purified people of Germany, be able to greet the advent of a reign of concord, peace and justice, with cries of joy? When will the mediæval cry that hailed the passage of kings ring out among the crowd to greet the final and decisive victory of Right? Noël! Noël! Noël!

Doctor W. . . . pays us a visit. He is so drunk this Christmas night that he can scarcely stand. *Deutschland über Alles* has just been yelled below, and the sound of the organ rises from the chapel close by. This makes him merry.

"The Frenchmen are to sing. They must

take part in the German festival. They must. I insist upon it."

So some of the Frenchmen sing *Minuit, Chrétiens*, and *Noël des Gueux*. Then a light tenor took up an air from *Carmen*. My barbarian is enchanted.

He remains in the ward till very late in the night. Herr K. . . . joins him. These two representatives of the body of German officers at last make up their minds to depart, supporting each other. They stagger away, slamming the heavy doors after them. And the great peace of night descends on the hospital.

We talk a good while longer.

December 27.—I hope to get up soon. This dull inaction is very trying to me. In four or five weeks, says Doctor W. . . . He does not seem very sure. Indeed, my wound is not going on very well. The man at Montigny may be proud of his work. Every five or six days, splinters as thick as one's little finger are taken from the wound. And in vain does it close up; it has to be constantly reopened.

December 29.—A new comrade was brought in to us the other night. I am told he is the son of an important French official in the Finance Department. The poor fellow is dreadfully injured. When we left Montigny,

he seemed to be in a critical state ; they were unable to bring him away with us. The wound in his thigh has not improved at all. Lying motionless in bed, with sheets rolled up, has caused bed-sores which make his condition more and more painful. Will it be possible to save him ? The doctor thinks not.

He is the only one, or nearly the only one, among us to whom the head doctor has made the merciful concession of invalid diet. I had a few minutes' talk with him. He has no hope of returning to France, of living long enough to see his family again. His sufferings are a martyrdom. We have all gone through a term of fever and insomnia, and of pain which time gradually alleviates. But for P. . . . each day seems a more painful stage in the slow ascent of his Calvary.

He cannot sleep. He is delirious most of the time, and the words that fall from his lips are at once tragic and childish. They people the night with visions, phantoms of those he loves, the figure of the mother he worshipped, and who died some years ago. And we look on despairingly at the struggle between the powers of Life, not yet broken, and of Death, prowling darkly round its prey.

I have seen many men die suddenly in their prime from hæmorrhage after an operation ;

my eyes have rested on many bloodless faces, and have met many eyes already veiled by the cold shade of death; but I do not think, even should I live months and years in this place of suffering, that I shall ever see a face so full of anguish, revolt, and agitation as that of poor P. . . .

December 30.—A visit from the pastor. He is a *Stadtpfarrer* from Berlin, with a deeply lined, ascetic face. His eyes are restless and piercing. They have none of that limpidity which reveals a soul at peace. He speaks French laboriously, with great difficulty.

He starts at once on the beginning, the preliminaries of the war. According to him the Belgians are " a small, dishonoured race." History will prove that they were bent on self-aggrandisement. Belgium was no longer neutral. She had herself violated her neutrality by signing (?) a *defensive* treaty with her ally, England.

It is all very simple. There is no need to waste words. As to Serbia, apply the same reasoning, and you will recognize the aggressor. In this case it was not Great Britain, but " treacherous Russia " who set the ball rolling.

Germany was pacific. Germany was rich in the blood of her children and the labour of their hands. Every day saw her trade and

prosperity increasing. Her financial strength was growing in proportion. And her people set an example of industry, of "simple and poetic manners," of domestic virtue, in short, of "true patriotism." Well governed at home and strongly armed against danger from abroad, her mission was a lofty one. She desired to give to the world "a new form of general progress." And she was in a position to do so, for her race was a young one, preserved hitherto from the degeneration characteristic of Southern races. But the world would not have it so. As in the case of the Hebrews of old, it put forth all its strength in the effort to crush Germany. But Germany is very strong. She had foreseen this war. And her victory is already assured. God has manifested His will to her by blessing the arms of the two German sovereigns.

H'm. I prick up my ears! Is he really talking of the old Francis Joseph? I find it very difficult to keep my countenance, but I scrutinize him in silence. The extraordinary part of the business is that he is sincere. At least so it seems. The apparent ingenuousness is but the eloquent expression of German pride.

Venturing next into the paths of the future, the prophet is less confident, but he enu-

merates all the factors that will make for German victory :

" The victory of Germany will mean eternal peace. No one will draw the sword after that. From our extended frontiers we shall dictate our orders to London and Paris. And the nations will work ; they will live in peace. We shall give them the necessary calm and repose. We shall watch over them."

Oh ! shade of Bismarck watching over the peace of Europe, standing by the sepulchre where his victims sleep !

I remark quietly that things may perhaps turn out differently. In this case, a German defeat. . . . His arms raised heavenwards with an imploring gesture, his eyes wide with stupefaction, the Pfarrer replies :

" That could not *dare* to be possible."

Germany vanquished ? . . . Yes. God sometimes dares. . . .

Then he begins to laugh. He protests that I don't mean what I say. I, a soldier, must be well aware that we are lost.

" Continued resistance is pure madness. German strength is supreme."

There is a God, of course ; but the Pfarrer does not speak of Him. He is indifferent to the fact that I am mutilated, lying on a bed of pain. The consolations of faith are not

essential. The main thing is to convince me of German strength and German genius.

But I have my revenge. He knew nothing of the Marne, of the brilliant victory gained by our troops, of the thousands of Prussians who are sleeping on the plain. Not to be behindhand, I say sixty thousand, and among them several thousands of the Prussian Guard who fell in the marshes of Saint-Gond. My man is startled. I set forth the heavy retreat of their troops after this battle, their present immobility, the complete failure of their sudden attack. I speak of time, of the interventions that may be expected, of Italy bestirring herself, of Francophile Rumania. The Pfarrer no longer laughs. He suddenly asks this vast question :

" What, according to you, would be the conditions of peace dictated to Germany, if she should be beaten ? "

I am well pleased at this. Ah ! Pfarrer, I will give you something to think of now. Did you not say that you would want Calais and Dunkirk as ports from which to crush the English. And did you not add :

" Belfort, Toul, Verdun, and Maubeuge will remain in our hands, to ensure the frontier against attack in the future."

And not satisfied with this, did you not speak

of a tremendous indemnity, which would subject French finance to your control for the next two hundred years ?

My voice becomes very serious. The Pfarrer, listening attentively, bends over my bed :

" Our conditions, monsieur ? The mildest of them would mean the end of Germany. But listen : the formal destruction of your national unity ; a return to the state of things Bismarck upset. No more Krupp at Essen : his factories razed to the ground. No more war budget ; for each State will contribute to the formidable indemnity : Westphalia with its mines, all the other States according to their resources, and for centuries to come, if necessary. No more German army. The Kaiser and his family rooted out of Prussia. Territorial losses : Alsace-Lorraine for us, and the left bank of the Rhine. German Limburg given to Belgium. Your ships to be given up to England, Kiel an English port, or perhaps destroyed. Your fleet, which will probably be intact at the end of the war, as it keeps safely in harbour, will be divided between us. Austria dismembered : Russia to take what she chooses. Hungary a kingdom ; Poland a kingdom ; Serbia extended ; the Trentino and Trieste given to the Italians. Constantinople, an open

city, administered by us. Is this enough for you ? "

" Not a bit of it ! Besides, we shall conquer. I am convinced of it. I believe it firmly."

He has risen to go. I look at him again.

" But do you not believe, monsieur, that there is One above us who can dispose of men and of nations as He will ? Above our justice, that of France or that of Germany, is there not a larger justice, Justice in the abstract ? "

" Yes, that of *our* God."

I had spoken quietly and calmly, without affectation. The answer was brutal, trenchant as a sword. And it is elaborated thus :

" God is not with you. The God of Germany will bless her armies."

He bows frigidly. The visit is over. My man goes off in haste. And I remain alone and pensive.

Who knew anything of German mentality ? Had its characteristics ever been defined in our books ? Was it deliberately concealed ? It is before me now, and it is a disturbing thing. The glimpse I have had of it this evening opens a truer perspective before me. How far we have travelled from Goethe ! Did Madame de Staël dream her Germany ? 1815 seems remote indeed ! The

German of those days was described as simple. Intercourse with him was facilitated by his amiable qualities. Times have changed. Germany has mated her tender soul with a ferocious materialism, and we see the children of this union. The German of to-day is a dual being, infinitely complex. There is a loss of equilibrium as between his still poetic heart and his Nietzschean brain.

January 1, 1915.—A French aeroplane has flown over the town. I saw it perfectly from my bed. All the guns were firing. It hovered very high in the air, dropped a few bombs, and went off sedately. It was barely eight o'clock. And we feel cheered. It brought us something of a greeting from our native soil, its children and its things.

Vive, vive la France, this New Year's Day! God give her victory, keep and bless our dear ones! This is the wish of our hearts.

January 3.—As to German mentality: I sound one or two of the orderlies. They are men of the people; one is a carpenter of Lorraine; a second is a sailor; a third an assistant in a Munich shop. The last two are Bavarians; they are of mediocre intelligence, save perhaps the second. They are weary of the war, but they will not allow this. I try them on this ground.

"Do you think the end of this terrible war is in sight?"

"Yes, when our chiefs choose," the sailor answered.

The Lorrain adds at once:

"Never mind. We did not want the war. You ought to stop first."

"Really? . . . But how?"

"By confessing that you are beaten."

"France," explains the shopman, "would get better terms if she gave in now."

I expected that; there spoke the tradesman. He starts off at once on a long speech, punctuated by *nicht wahr*'s. Germany is invincible, sure of victory. I catch a phrase here and there, for he speaks too fast for me. The Russians are poor soldiers. The English, pirates. We, the French, are not much to be feared; we are too highly strung, not well disciplined; we shall be tired out the first. It is no use talking to him about the Marne.

"Yes, I know," he replies at once, "you said that before. But we don't believe it, for the German army could not be defeated. If it retreated, it was for strategic reasons."

This is the true German! Facts are nothing to him. He writes his history for himself. And what he records, even in defeat, though he does not use that word, is his faith in his

aims; not what he has done, or has been unable to do, but what he will inevitably do to-morrow. . . . The same reasoning is applied to the German atrocities, on which I touch discreetly. They do not deny these. "War is war," says the carpenter; and the sailor concludes:

"You don't think that war can be made without killing people? Fighting is killing. And killing is a useful work. It will be as it was in China. You will remember longer."

January 7.—We have a new corporal. The other did his arduous work quietly. The new one is unspeakable. He walks about swaying his hips, with a dreamy meditative air. He is said to be a writer. Perhaps he is a poet. We took a dislike to each other on the very second day. He kept on coming into the ward with a paper in his hand, proclaiming imaginary victories.

"A thousand Frenchmen *kaput*; eight machine guns taken. Enormous, colossal losses."

This morning I was so much irritated that I asked him coldly how many men the Germans had lost in carrying out this operation. "*Kein Verlust*" ("No losses") was his reply. I began to laugh, and my friends echoed me. The German flew into a rage. Curses and insults.

I shrugged my shoulders and reproached the brute with his lack of delicacy. We are French wounded, not prisoners. Not one of us surrendered without fighting. It was due to the helplessness caused by our serious wounds that we were now the unhappy and involuntary guests of a hostile country. Therefore, if he did not respect us, I should complain. It was no part of his duty to bring us news. It was his duty to tend us; ours was to be silent, to love France mutely, to love her even were she unfortunate and crushed, which she is not yet, and cannot be.

He went out in a fury, his boots resounding on the polished floor. He is an educated man, it seems, a large landowner in the Rhine district.

January 12.—A German Sister. Her name: Erizia. Her community: a *Krankenhaus* (hospital) of some kind a long way off in Westphalia. Her domicile: San Klemens. It is she who nurses us. We would willingly dispense with her attentions. Physically, small.

Her face is oval, fairly regular, almost pretty. When she is reading her eyes are calm and grave. Sister Erizia can smile, though not, of course, on the French, and her smile is sweet. It contradicts the cold cruelty of her little hands. When she is dressing a

wound, it is useless to cry out. C. . . . could tell you all about it. She tortures him as she chooses.

If perchance you dread the cold of the January mornings, being thinly covered; if you are shivering in your bed, Sister Erizia is a ministering angel! She opens all the doors and windows, setting up a current of icy air. And woe to him who complains! Her mouth is like a machine-gun. She rushes at you, seizes all your wrappings, your sheets, and your blanket, and leaves you naked as a worm.

Christian charity, forgiveness and forgetfulness of offences are certainly not her strong points. Some patient may perchance have infringed the Teuton regulations in some trivial particular. Sister Erizia makes ready. She is immanent Justice, cold, sure, and implacable. Her grey silhouette is seen waiting in the passage. She catches the doctor as he passes, and the machine-gun unrolls its deadly belt. Good heavens, what a fusillade!

Perhaps you got up this morning. You feel very weak, and you sit down on the edge of your bed. She rushes over to you: "*Schweinereien! Schweinereien!*" This word is addressed to the French. Her small hands seize you, take you by the shoulders, and roll you

pitilessly to the ground. "*Nicht liegen.*" ("You are not to lie down.") You must either stay in bed all day or sit up all day. What do complications or hæmorrhages matter to Sister Erizia? Has she not two broken legs upon her tender conscience already and I know not how many relapses?

The soul of Erizia does not suffer for this, that virgin soul she offers with her prayers to the German God of Love. She serves her country without doing disservice to God. Did she not declare, on one mournful evening recently, that God had appointed Germany to chastise France, to destroy once for all that nest of impiety, vice, and alcoholism. Her two hands were clasped upon her thin breast. Her eyes smiled up at the "Great Ally" in Heaven. I felt as lonely as a shipwrecked man.

Sister Erizia is exquisite. She shows us some really touching attentions. She always chooses the time when we are at our meals to empty certain necessary utensils and carry them backwards and forwards through the ward.

January 16.—The German papers publish long articles on the battle of Soissons. I was careful to say nothing about it. The official lines seem to confirm the news. The Ger-

mans, however, confess that our troops fought with the utmost bravery. The German success, if success it be, was apparently due to the overflowing of some deep river, which hampered the French very much. They praise our artillery warmly, and then give an estimate of our losses. I discount the figures. It is always prudent to do this with the Germans.

January 18.—A tiresome business. I am put on a diet of broth for three days.

This morning the orderly who distributes the bread did not give me a portion as he usually does. The corporal's order. I said laughingly, but without arguing the point:

"Am I to die of hunger?"

I thought no more about it, but when Doctor W. . . . made his round he came up to me in a rage:

"You find fault with our food? . . . . You say we starve the French prisoners? That is very unjust, monsieur."

My bewilderment ought to have turned away his wrath. But one is not a Boche for nothing.

"You have a right to love your country, even when you are in our hands. But we cannot allow you to find fault with our food, with the German bread, monsieur."

I have at last regained the use of my voice. I try to explain matters, but in vain.

"You will be punished. Silence! I know you do not love Germany. But I did not think it was so bad as this. Three days of thin bouillon, and you will have a further punishment. No one must dare to praise France and speak ill of Germany here. If you forget this again, you will go to prison. You will be watched from this day forth."

He goes off, straight and stiff, followed by the corporal. The triumphant glance of the latter enlightens me. I remember. He was at the door this morning at 8 o'clock. He must have heard my remark. It was innocent enough, and only referred to myself. He twisted it, making it aggressive because general, and repeated it to the doctor.

January 20.—Zeppelins over England. The bells were rung in honour of the news. All the Germans are enchanted. I asked the orderlies how many ships had been destroyed. They looked at me, open-mouthed.

Just as I thought! They killed a few civilians, murdered a few women, perhaps destroyed a few houses. And they call that a great victory!

As to the military result they care nothing, that this was quite unimportant. Their object was to terrorize, to frighten the English. I do not think that they will succeed.

January 25.—I got up for the first time. I said nothing about it to the doctor, for since our last encounter he never speaks to me, and pretends not to see me. So I put on my clothes, and then, hopping on one foot, I took a walk in the small ward, resting my hands on the beds. I did not suffer overmuch, and got back to my own bed after a few minutes.

To-morrow I will try to walk with crutches.

January 26.—To-day they admit the loss of the *Blücher*. But all the newspapers write of it with fury. They talk of a surprise, almost of treachery. It is curious how every fight in which they get the worst of it seems to the Germans something abnormal and irregular.

January 27.—The Emperor's birthday. The orderlies were drunk almost at cock-crow. The bells seem to share their intoxication. They have been clanging in every tower since daybreak. The chaplain exhorts us all to pray for "the speedy peace of the Emperor."

To the devil with that peace! I remark irreverently upon the orgy of bell-ringing which has distinguished this festival from that of Christmas. The bells were very eloquent on that day, but not to this extent.

"The Kaiser seems to be held in greater reverence here than the Messiah."

He laughs foolishly. Then his pale lips utter the Latin words: "*Philosophia humana!*"

He might have added: *germanica.*

January 30.—The days pass, and each one is like the last. I get up a little every day. I go into the corridor, tapping with my crutches. I suffer less; but I cannot sleep at night.

What joy and what sadness in this simple action of walking! Sadness, for it recalls the past, my active, joyous strength, my long tramps in the woods and along shady river-banks. And yet joy too, for everything is new to the sight and rejoices the heart after such sufferings. Adversity gives a new heart.

January 31.—*Le bedit gommerce allemand!* (German petty trade.) We know all about that. We pay high prices for our tobacco and cigarette papers. Our orderlies make large profits. Now the Inspector himself, a schoolmaster from Les Sablons, and the Interpreter, who holds the rank of a lieutenant, begin to imitate them. They come into the wards.

"Who wants to buy anything? We can provide woollen articles at very moderate

prices: knitted helmets, waistcoats, socks, vests, flannel waist-belts ; or purses, etc.

Orders are plentiful. The French prisoners always have too much money. I, for my part, ask for a common purse, in place of the one stolen from me at Saint-Mihiel, and then for a pair of braces. My goods are delivered two days later. The braces are good ; the price is high : 6 marks 75 pfennige for a very ordinary article. I ordered them, so I pay. The exorbitant price of the purse is remarkable : 8 marks 60 pfennige, no less ! The purse is a nice one, of crushed morocco, with a strong clasp. But I might have bought five for the price in any French fancy shop. I say nothing. I pay. And all the rest is on the same scale. Common cardigans range from 12 to 25 marks. I note that these were not of pure wool, but the usual mixture. Our Inspector doubles the prices. I soon have proof of this : as the wounded are not allowed to have more than 3 marks in their possession, they get the amount of their purchases deducted from the sums they have in the office. The accounts are very carelessly kept, and errors are frequent, but the strange thing is that they are all to the detriment of the office. Several of the wounded have the benefit of an article for which they have paid nothing,

because it has never been entered against them. The officials never notice this. Their profits are so big that the balance is always greatly in their favour.

I may say a word in passing about these ingenious persons; the San Klemens Interpreter is a lace-manufacturer; before the war he lived in a French town very near Nancy.

He is a youngish man, from thirty to thirty-two years old; a worshipper of everything Boche, and with a hearty contempt for France. He speaks French without any accent, and lived for a long time in Paris. What is this perfectly healthy individual doing in a hospital? Why, taking into account his rank, and the services he would be able to render in the French towns occupied by the German hordes, was he not sent to the front? . . .

Various indiscretions threw light upon this point. Many German manufacturers domiciled in France have rendered immense services of a special kind to the German Government. In other words, *they were spies*. As soon as war was declared, the majority, who had been warned beforehand, joined the German troops massed on the frontier. But, by virtue of an order given by the powers, the significance of which

I shall point out presently, nearly all of them were kept in the medical formations, in the offices of the garrison or the *Kommandantur*, or employed in railway stations and concentration camps. The German Government thought it worth while to keep them at home and preserve them from danger. It thus repays their ante-bellum services in kind, and keeps at its disposal adroit and active agents, who will be in a position to resume their special activities immediately after the conclusion of peace. I know from a trustworthy source that there are thousands of Germans thus held in reserve, a veritable militia of spies and traders, who are only waiting for this to return to France, furnished with authentic papers obtained from foreign Governments,* of course in neutral countries, with the object of showing them to be, not Germans, but peaceful traders, compelled by the war to return for a time to their own

* Certain neutrals, whose affection for France is above suspicion, have called my attention to the fact that this word *authentic* might be taken in too narrow a sense. It is hardly necessary to say that I do not suggest that any foreign Government would favour such manœuvres. The adjective used merely means *ostensibly* authentic, but in reality either forged or (let us hope only in rare cases) obtained by fraud or cunning. I may add that it will be easy to make such operations impossible, if we choose, and this for the greater security of France and the tranquillity of genuine neutrals, who might be justly offended by indiscriminate suspicion.

country, where they have merely been awaiting the end of a campaign that had paralysed their trade.

It must be our business to be on the alert, and drive out this vermin when the moment comes.

Februry 3.—I am now able to go to the smoking-room. The time passes more quickly. The French wounded who can get up have an irksome task assigned them; they have to peel the large quantities of worm-eaten and rotten potatoes daily provided for consumption in the hospital. I said irksome, but delicate would be a better word, for it is a difficult business. Our knives, which are rounded at the ends, are ill adapted to the task, so the parings are very thick. The orderlies are furious at this, and the head doctor intervenes. The *Schweinehund's* (pig-dogs) of his exhortations fall thick and fast upon us.

"They must be made to eat all these parings. If it is like this to-morrow, they shall have all this pig-food themselves. You can tell them so."

He addresses me. So I translate faithfully.

Februry 4.—Henceforth we are only to write home once a week, one card at a time,

and two letters, one on the 15th and one on the 30th of the month. However, we do get our parcels here. It is not as it was at Montigny. But they are not very often intact: sausage, for instance, the good country sausage the very thought of which makes our mouths water, is always confiscated. Why? Because sausage-meat would be too heavy for our invalid stomachs! In spite of the fact that we have it every night! But what we get, it is true, is of German manufacture. Potted meat and biscuits reach us, but we have to pay toll. The distributor of the parcels nearly always abstracts here a tin of pickled tunny, there a terrine of *foie gras*, and elsewhere some packets of tobacco.

As to tobacco, we are no longer allowed to buy this in the town, as we used to do. The German Government's stores are running short. It therefore reserves its cigars, tobacco, and cigarettes for the German troops. We have to get ours from home.

It is a cruel regulation; but our orderlies have their little weaknesses. They are very commercial. By paying a little more, 50 pfennige, for instance, for a packet of tobacco that costs them 18, and 35 pfennige for cigarette-papers worth 5, we can get all we want. Business is business.

February 6.—A Lorrain tells me that bread is very dear. "The bakeries are subject to special laws. They must only sell bread on presentation of a family card. Each adult has a right to 150 grammes daily. This is a maximum subject to modification. Various substances compose this bread; potatoes chiefly, either pulped or as flour, bran, and other kinds of meal. The stock of rye is dwindling. And it is a long time till harvest." There is no question of famine. Here the potatoes come in again. "We have a great stock of these valuable tubers. The Emperor himself eats them. Bread, or at least fancy bread, is banished from his table."

He then shows me the menu of one of the Imperial meals, which appeared in a Berlin newspaper: rice and barley soup, boiled potatoes, tinned meat with carrots, preserved fruits, army bread.

But may not the supply of potatoes give out? Within the last few days the *Lothringer Zeitung* urged all pig-breeders to kill one-third of their animals to obviate the necessity of feeding them with potatoes. And the article foreshadowed special legislation should this appeal prove fruitless.

February 8.—Since my punishment the corporal avoids me, and the doctor does not

speak to me. The chaplain, however, comes sometimes. He tells me of Hindenburg's victories over the Russians. "The victor of Tannenberg," "the soldier-liberator" seems to be the idol of the day. His bulldog face appears on boxes, letter-paper, cigars, and penholders.

February 9.—There seems to be a relative calm before Pont-à-Mousson, though the cannonade still continues. Saint-Blaise and Verny, the Metz forts nearest to this point, have suffered a good deal, they tell me, from our artillery. One of them is almost destroyed. Airships too, taking advantage of the clear weather, often come over the town. The field of Frescaty, where the Boche air-fleet is housed, receives plenty of bombs; other favoured spots are the railway station and the Prussian barracks. There are many victims, but the numbers are kept secret.

February 10.—I am again on a broth diet. I am getting used to it now! This time my offence was serious.

A few fowls and two ducks live in the yard under our window on the right. This morning I had a dry crust in my locker, for I had refrained from solid food for a couple of days, on account of intestinal troubles, and I crumbled it for the birds. The corporal saw

me. Serenade and orchestra! Reported forthwith to the doctor, who came into the ward like a whirlwind.

"It is all very well to love one's country." For the second time this is the refrain. Doctor W. . . . is not very inventive. "But to make war in this manner! It is a crime, monsieur. To despise and throw away the bread of Germany! To diminish the stock of bread without reason! If you had not lost a limb, you should go to prison. I will tell the head doctor."

Meanwhile, "white broth." And here I remember that I did not note above the constituents of this mixture. It is a soup made of bran, with a few grains of barley, and no fat apparently, bearing but a very faint likeness to any eatable soup. A bowl of this morning and evening. Nothing else. No bread, no vegetables, and, of course, no meat. After a few days of this diet, the patient is calm and light, and fit for a journey.

I am condemned to it for four days. But the good doctor reassures me.

"You will have some more before your punishment is over."

He means more days. The corporal laughs loudly. And I imitate him. Should I protest, or show signs of suffering, they would be

delighted, and I will not give them this satisfaction. So hurrah for " white broth " ! Every German punishment is an honour for a French prisoner. And the more absurd it is, the prouder it makes one to undergo it.

February 12.—Germany has decreed the blockade of the English coast for February 18. The newspapers exult and Von Tirpitz is exalted to the skies. After the appointed date all vessels, even those of neutrals, whether carrying contraband of war or not, will be torpedoed without mercy. The submarines are already at their posts. The anger of neutrals and the protests of New York alike leave Germany unmoved. A frenzy of destruction seems to have laid hold of this people. And what a joy for them, to find themselves surrounded by enemies, execrated and vilified, to see all Europe arrayed against them !

February 13.—A truly German scene. The sergeant-major on duty is drilling two men. One is our former corporal, the other a corporal who acts as dresser to the doctor. These two men make the half turn, march in step, and come back. And the Feldwebel insults them : " *Schweinehund ! Schweinehund !* " I thought this epithet was reserved for the French. When one of the sufferers comes

within range, the sergeant-major applies his boot to his back, or drives his hairy fist into a somewhat pale face. It is a revolting sight.

It appears that the two corporals came in drunk, and in consequence late, last night.

February 14.—I am in the dressing ward. I have unrolled my bandage. Doctor W. . . . looks at me askance. The affair of the ducks and the bread is still upon his mind. He is still very angry. A German, we know, takes forty-eight hours to consider a problem. My wound is almost closed. The flesh, which has shrunk very much, looks healthy and red. It no longer suppurates.

The doctor signs to me. I climb upon the table. He takes his forceps, probes the wound, makes it bleed, continues ruthlessly. At intervals he turns to me :

" Well, my patriot, does it hurt ? "

I shake my head, and the operation continues. He strikes the projecting bone with his forceps. The pain is atrocious. I grip the sides of the table. I will not scream and I feel myself turning pale. He repeats his question, an evil gleam in his green eyes.

" Does it hurt ? No ? Not yet ? "

I shake my head angrily.

" Yes, I know the French are very courageous. But just let us see."

He takes the flesh in both hands, and brings the two edges together. Then he presses with all his strength. I feel a cold sweat break out over me. I close my eyes suddenly, to avoid seeing the man. I am afraid of flinching, of giving way and howling aloud. The pressure continues; the scar, which is broad at the edges, tears presently. The blood pours over the doctor's hands. He looks like a butcher. And still he asks: "Does it hurt?" I do not answer. I feel a mad desire to strike at that narrow forehead, those eyes and that mouth, and to cry aloud the words that are on my lips: "Coward! coward! brute!" But I keep silence. I raise myself with a supreme effort, and if my voice trembles, what I say at least sounds grave and simple:

"A Frenchman can bear pain when it is necessary. Was this? I think not, monsieur. But God will judge you."

He laughs loud and long, sends for a glass and pours a few drops into it:

"Drink this brandy. You have been brave."

I reject the glass, quietly but firmly. And the dressing is completed. Doctor K. . . . has arrived. He is told what has happened. It amuses him very much. He adds his contribution:

"Necessary or unnecessary, that's our business. Anyhow, the *Kriegsfreiwilliger* (volunteer) will remember us, and that's what we want. You may think yourself lucky to get off so cheaply. One leg is not much. If it had depended on me, you would have lost both."

They carried me back to bed. I could not walk. I am exhausted and feverish.

February 18.—I have had to stay in bed for three days. I had a good deal of fever. The doctor came often. Was he ashamed of his action? . . . An orderly who helps in the dressing ward overheard fragments of a whispered consultation. They want to send me to a prisoners' camp as soon as I am able to travel. There is to be an exchange soon, but I am not to be included in this. Orders are given that I am to be strictly watched, and the ultimate sentence is to be pronounced if I commit the slightest fault.

There is no reason to doubt the orderly's word. He is a good fellow, gentle to the patients, quiet, kindly, and helpful. He seems to have become attached to me. So I take his hint to heart, and I will be on my guard.

February 19.—German victories in the Masurian Lakes region. The newspapers are

full of details. They convey no very clear impression to me, unless it be that the Russians seem to have been caught at a disadvantage, and that they will have all their work to do over again. Very little news from the French front. The vagueness of the *communiqués* seems very strange to us. Is it because our *poilus* . . . ?

February 20.—The Boche newspapers are furious. The American Note touching the blockade and the projected torpedoing of neutral vessels by German submarines has filled the cup of their wrath to overflowing. Yesterday they merely grumbled. To-day they break out into insults.

The *Lothringer Zeitung*, for instance, concludes a leading article by these biting lines, which I translate without the help of a dictionary : "America, my dear, since you are for sale, how much do you want to induce you to cease sending munitions to the enemy ? When will you give up furnishing projectiles and provisions to those who are shedding the blood of our German youth ? "

The Boche is clumsy by nature and by tradition, but his Press is positively fatuous.

February 21.—There is still talk of an exchange, but it is very vague. England, however, seems to have made a beginning.

I am improving daily, but my visits to the dressing ward upstairs are very rare. I have determined to dress my leg myself. The orderly gives me bandages, sterilized gauze, all that is necessary, in short.

February 26.—I have not written for the last few days. A rigorous search has been going on. Some German soldiers who were taken prisoners in France have been sentenced by court-martial to several years' imprisonment. French gold and jewels were found upon them. The Germans are furious. The Press is howling. Reprisals are in progress.

A booted inspector, assisted by two soldiers, ransacked our lockers, clothes, and papers, without much result. However, an old mark was found in a purse. This mark was twisted and defaced as by a blow. This was quite enough to suggest that the mark had been taken from some wounded German by one of our men. A bullet must have struck it. Hence a report and an inquiry.

The Kommandantur was not quite so imbecile. They must have concluded that when such an argument bears the German stamp, it is not enough to justify the condemnation of a wounded Frenchman, the proof being over fragile. The mark was confiscated, and no more was heard of the matter.

Nevertheless the search endangered my papers. I had to make up my mind to destroy a few very severe pages here and there, noting the dates and keeping a brief summary. I shall be able to restore them from memory later on.

February 27.—A table of the food. First, the German bread; I have mentioned this already. When fresh it is eatable. But as a result of the admixture of potatoes, as soon as it is two days old, it ferments, and then it has a horrible taste. We get 200 grammes a day, sometimes more, sometimes less. It is not black bread, the *Kriegsbrot*, as yet. But we are promised this in March or April.

The *café au lait* is passable. Of course it is not coffee. It is some kind of a mixture which looks rather like the water of our rivers when they have been stirred up by a storm. The orderlies tell us it is made of roasted acorns. No sugar, naturally.

The midday meal includes a bowl of potatoes more or less mashed. There is no fat with these. A little meat floats in the grey liquid, generally tinned meat. The evening meal is more meagre: barley soup or hop soup. It is water in which some crushed grain has been boiled. It has a slight persistent aroma of mint. The pork-butcher's

wares complete the meal: a slice of smoked sausage of very recent manufacture, showing no affinity to Frankfort sausage; sometimes white puddings, which smell very strong, occasionally brawn, so-called, by which we must understand a conglomerate of nerves and lips, skin, and gutta-percha gelatine, very difficult to masticate. Sometimes a bowl of tea is substituted for the soup. This is a treat. It is flavoured with a little brandy, and has a pleasant, peppery taste. We prefer it to maggi.

This is the entire menu. I must not, however, omit to say that once a week we have lentils or red or white beans instead of potatoes; nor must I forget the dash of vinegar, the good German vinegar, that forms a part of all rations and is so pleasant to the delicate stomachs of the feverish and severely wounded patients.

February 28.—The material organization of the hospital is good. The bedding is sufficient. The mattress is thin and consequently hard, but it is clean. The service is done by stations, a station being equivalent to a story. In ours, three orderlies and a corporal share the work. The nursing is done by the Sisters. They are very harsh. I have sketched one in these notes. With very few exceptions—

Sister Celesta, for instance, who is kind and good-tempered—the rest are like her. They are ruddy Westphalians, with strong biceps and rough tongues. They need no help to make a bed. They snatch up a wounded man, throw him on a stretcher, and reverse the operation when the bed is ready. It would be quite useless to complain. These same Sisters do the dressings in the wards. The method is always the same: the wound is washed with benzine, gauze is applied, then cotton-wool, and over this a linen bandage. They also give subcutaneous injections of opium or morphia, and the use they make of this last drug without the doctor's supervision seems to me excessive. Some of the wounded in my ward have already had over 110 injections, one every evening, and very often another at midnight.

The doctors I have already mentioned complete the staff and control it. They dress the wounds of the more severely injured patients. Their work is done in a well-lighted room, provided with all necessary utensils, and each "station" has one of its own. The methods are the same as those of the Sisters: benzine and oxygenized water; never any tincture of iodine, though they have this. Sterilized gauze or wet dressings are applied, the latter

very rarely. When the wound closes, they dress it with a reddish ointment the name of which I do not know, or with a yellowish cream contained in tubes, which they call *Borsalb* (boracic ointment). I may note that all the non-amputated wounded legs look very horrible. The bones have crossed, causing a shortening of several centimetres. If we add to these the daily experiments tried by the doctors, grafting of flesh or sutures of nerves—never successful indeed, our doctors being young and inexperienced—we shall have duly noted all the attentions here bestowed on the wounded prisoners.

But I must not forget to describe a new process, probably unknown to our French doctors. Say your leg is too short and there is reason to fear contraction, shrinkage of the nerves. In such a case, our young doctors —I saw this done twice myself under Doctor W. . . .—bore a hole through the knee or the heel. Into this hole they insert one of those large square wooden pins with thick heads used by carpenters. It measures from 12 to 15 centimetres, so it protrudes at either end. A strong cord is fixed to the extremities. This cord is passed over a pulley fixed to a plank fastened at the foot of the bed, and supports a weight varying from 15 to 30

pounds. The weight exercises a continuous and very trying tension on the contracted limb. The pain thus caused is intense. This makes the doctors laugh. One day this apparatus was applied to the heel of a patient. Presently he began to complain. Doctor W. . . . would not listen to him. Two days passed. On the morning of the third day the apparatus gave way. The bag of sand fell to the ground, dragging with it the dressings. An orderly came to the rescue. In the bloody bandages he found the patient's heel, which had been gradually detached, and finally brutally torn off.

The wooden pin, however, is still used; two wounded men in Ward 93 are undergoing this torture now as I write.

March 2.—The exchange of crippled soldiers is to begin to-morrow between France and Germany. But no one here is much concerned at the news. We know that Constance is full of wounded soldiers, and that those who are to return to France are already within its walls. So we shall not be of the number.

March 3.—Troops are passing in the street. In the grey twilight the infantrymen follow one another closely, tramping heavily on the pavement. The splendid order of the troops

and the much praised alignment of the German soldiers seems to us to have been exaggerated. They carry their short, squat Mauser rifles either on the right or the left shoulder, apparently as they please.

Now they are beginning to sing a hymn. The music is solemn, powerful, and religious. The voices which answer each other from section to section sound cultivated. In the evening silence the effect is magnificent. As I listen I forget that these men are soldiers returning from the trenches, the vulgar subordinates of a criminal government. I try to stifle a curious feeling of admiration and respect. For the music is impressive; it reveals a strong and harmonious whole. There is something grand, severe, and religious about it, which lingers strangely after the sounds have passed, as if all the Germany of the past, with its misty mildness and sentimentality, had survived in these songs.

I have forgotten to mention the military concerts to which we are occasionally treated by the doctor's orders. Although there are no German wounded in the hospital an artillery band, or more frequently that of the Bavarian infantry, invades our courtyard. Pierrots dressed in blue, who seem to have borrowed the brass epaulettes of the Spanish toreros,

deafen us for an hour. The strident notes of the brazen instruments, the despairing cry of flutes and fifes, and the explosions of the big drum make up a confusing whole which evokes the field of battle and the screech of shells.

All this is far enough from Bizet, who, it appears, is much appreciated by German civilians !

The concluding piece is invariably a mosaic, in which the national hymns of Austria and Germany emerge discreetly at intervals.

A rather amusing anecdote will illustrate the first concert. All the French wounded, who were assembled in the smoking-room, applauded the German performers heartily. Are we not Frenchmen, and ready to acknowledge a politeness, even on the part of our enemies ? But the zeal of the audience rather outran its discretion, for it lavished applause on the finale mentioned above. It was a sin of ignorance, to be sure, but the Boches were enchanted. An *Unteroffizier* expressed his pleasure to me :

" *Ach !* that's right, they applaud our war song. The French are really courteous ! They too love Germany, now they have lived here ! "

I smiled.

"*Warum?* Are you scoffing? . . . You do not think they applauded?"

"Oh yes, *Unteroffizier*; but they did not know they were applauding the famous air of which you are so proud."

"*Ach! . . . So! . . .*"

He looks at me with widely opened eyes, and goes off slowly. Presently I noticed him talking to a group. And two hours later, when he encountered me in the passage, he admitted quite frankly:

"*Kolossal! Kolossal!* You were quite right! I could not find a single man who had recognized our song."

His disappointment amuses me. But I do not really know whether his pride or his artless belief in the musical hegemony of Wagner's country suffers most from this discovery.

March 4.—I am under orders for one of the camps, so Doctor W. . . . tells me. So I think the contingent for France must be leaving soon, and that this must be a manœuvre to prevent me from being of the number.

The same day, evening.—Visit from the head doctor. He became very angry directly he saw me: "*Nicht! Nicht!*" he cried to the *Unteroffizier*, and then he spoke of *Frankreich*. I thought he was going to eat him!

Doctor W. . . . will be furious when he finds that his manœuvres have failed. Anyhow, I shall stay here.

March 5.—A few Russians have arrived, among them the huge infantry Guardsman, Ch. . . . None of them can understand us, and none of us can speak Russian, so it is difficult to find out anything about them. We discover, however, that they were taken last winter, and that they had been placed in German factories. It was here that they fell ill, or were injured. They are magnificent fellows, Ch. . . . more especially. He is a perfect giant, 6 feet 2 tall, or more, and well proportioned. They suffer very much from hunger. We give them provisions when we get our parcels. They have no money and no tobacco, and they are terrible smokers. The doctors have been much amused by them ever since they have been here. It is a favourite pastime with the former to make the Russians come into the courtyard or the passage in the hour devoted to exercise. Then they say to them: "Nicolas Nicolaïevitch, *kaput?*" And my Russians become indignant and vociferous, crying aloud: "*Nix kaput! Nix kaput!*" (They say *nix* for *nicht*, not). This comical sight delights the Teutons, who deal out cigars to them.

But when he turns his back on them, Ch. . . . invariably blinks his Oriental eyes, and comes over to us, murmuring: "*Nix Russ, nix Russ kaput, Guirmann kaput.*" And we applaud the sentiment.

March 8.—French airships very often come over the town. Now that I am more active, I run to the window when the guns announce their arrival. And the tiny objects floating among the clouds, and often lost to our sight, seem to mock at projectiles. There is a little white smoke: shrapnel shells bursting. They are speedily answered. There is a violent explosion, several times repeated. Bombs fall one after the other. Then, their mission accomplished, the airships sail away. Hail, birds of France!

March 10.—I climb up to the fourth floor now nearly every day. There are dormer-windows there which give an extensive view of the country. The town lies at my feet, beyond it the dim blue hills. The works on their summits indicate the forts. Farther off, the valley is indistinct. A mist hangs over the silvery river. The town seems dead; but the trams are still working. The chimneys of the factories, however, suggest sleep. There is not a puff of smoke.

That big building on the right must be a

barrack. A flag floats over it. I see the old quarters of Metz, black and grey houses, irregularly built, and short, narrow streets winding about San Klemens. The cathedral with its spires rises on the left. Some men are at work in one of its towers. Our orderlies have told me that this tower is to do duty as an observatory in the event of a sudden hostile advance upon Metz. This was inevitable. After Reims, Metz. The argument is a two-edged sword.

From San Klemens we overlook the whole of the old seminary with its four courts. A smaller courtyard behind the chapel seems to be kept for the hospital service. As I lean forward, trying nevertheless to avoid notice, the hearse that carries our dead enters this court. A large iron gate opens here on to the street in front of a watchmaker's shop. The word *Concierge*, in good French, was still legible for a time on one of the walls on the right. But they have now erased it. Then there is the grand courtyard. Flowers, shrubs, and evergreens. The chapel, of a somewhat indeterminate architecture, is enclosed in the building. And on three sides there is the street. But this is not distinguished by any special animation. Occasionally it re-echoes to the sound of wheels,

the tramp of a battalion on its way to manœuvres, the dull sound of a convoy.

We linger in pensive silence. We look long on the silent city. A few windows on the left seem to belong to well-to-do houses. At one of them we note the vague outline of a young girl's figure. Then, as she leans forward, we can distinguish her features : she has curly brown hair, an oval face, a very gentle expression. . . . Did she see us ? . . . The face seems to light up.

So we linger for a while, safe from unjust punishments, hidden in this retreat.

March 15.—The exchange has been effected. We learn the news from a few laconic notes that have appeared in the newspapers. Eighteen hundred of our men have returned to France. But we remain at Metz. Why ? . . . This is a mystery.

March 17.—The favourite meeting-place of those patients who can walk is the smoking-room. There are benches and boxes in the immense lavatory. We gather together daily to smoke. We peel potatoes and play cards : manille or piquet.

Towards evening, after supper, we also play, but not so often. We talk of the war, of yesterday, to-day, and to-morrow. A Breton suddenly raises a plaintive song. This is the

signal; each in his turn sings his artless lament or his famous lyric. Some of the Parisians, J. . . ., R. . . ., and several others, have a choice repertory. Sometimes we recite verses by way of interlude. I am called upon to contribute. I give them Hugo, his *Expiation*, and many other pieces; then Normand, Sully-Prudhomme, Richepin, and Musset. And the hours slip away. We are happy together.

March 19.—The French? How are they fighting? It would take many books to set forth, even briefly, the feats of arms discussed by the new arrivals.

One, however, which filled me with enthusiasm, shall be recorded. A half-section in the front-line trenches had been cut off while repulsing the attack of two German companies. The order was given to hold the position at any cost. Overwhelmed by numbers, however, they were beginning to give way. A small fort, partly demolished, was on their left, and here eleven men and a captain managed to entrench themselves after extraordinary efforts. The siege began. Our soldiers fired on the enemy as long as their cartridges held out, and with deadly effect, for the Germans, who had been reinforced by engineers, came on in large numbers. The brave leader of the heroic band was called upon to surrender time

after time. Each time the envoy was curtly repulsed.

Twenty hours passed thus, but no help came, and there were no cartridges left. The Germans then placed petards on the left, and blew up the fort. The explosion was terrible. Only the captain and four infantrymen were found in the breach when the Germans came in. The Prussian commander saluted these heroes, held out his hand to the captain, and allowed him to keep his sword.

"You have killed fifty or sixty men," he said afterwards to the officer.

And showing the remnants of the band to the Prussians, he added:

"It is an honour to fight against such soldiers."

Could a more splendid tribute have been paid to our soldiers, under more tragic circumstances? I heard this story from my good friend R. . . ., one of the survivors.

March 20.—A fine incident that has had painful effects. Yesterday evening about 8 o'clock, the French, revolted by the ignoble behaviour of their jailers, and also by the severity and injustice of the doctors, began to murmur the *Marseillaise*, at first in undertones; but this hymn is winged, it demands

full, strong voices, and, thundered forth by several, it made the walls resound.

I was in my ward. I had had a fall, which had condemned me to rest, and, sitting up in bed, I felt myself turn pale as I listened to the strains. There was a rush presently. Doctor W. . . . and the Inspector, with several armed men, hurried to the smoking-room.

"Which of you was singing?"

No answer. The doctor shook with fury.

"The *Marseillaise* at Metz!"

The Inspector, who was less agitated, tried another argument.

"Come, what is the matter with you? You are left in peace! You can come to the smoking-room, chat together, and play cards. And then you sing the *Marseillaise*! Do you want to be punished, or to get us into trouble?"

Doctor W. . . . goes round the room, scrutinizing the different groups. He is disappointed, for he does not find me. Yet it seemed such a good chance. It would have been a first-rate pretext for sending me off somewhere to a camp, perhaps to have me court-martialed.

But he does not give up yet. He comes into my ward.

"You were not there to join in the singing?"

No, I was not, and I regret it with all my heart!

I shake my head.

"Why did they sing?"

I can guess that. I make an evasive gesture.

"And . . . it was not you who ordered them to sing?"

The snare is too obvious. I answer coldly:

"I have no right, monsieur, to give any such orders. I know my duty to the men who are our warders, and that they hate the *Marseillaise*. Therefore I am content to love it in the depths of my heart and in silence. Your bandsmen are less tactful; they come and play their *Deutschland über Alles* under our very windows."

He gives me an evil glance and departs.

My comrades are uneasy. D. . ., then R. . ., and then some others come down from the smoking-room and describe the scene to me. There had been no prearrangement. The thing was sudden, spontaneous, and splendid. What would be the results?

March 22.—Storm in the air. R. . ., the genial singer, is condemned to "white broth." The doors of the smoking-room are locked. We are to peel the potatoes, however, but under the surveillance of the orderlies. Talking, singing, and laughing are strictly forbidden.

It is not so much the affair yesterday that

has made them angry as a French success at Les Éparges, an orderly tells me.

I learn that our men had taken a whole Prussian battalion prisoners, and had captured cannon and machine-guns, an important booty. Trains arrive every day at Metz, bringing reinforcements. The hospitals are full to overflowing. An offensive seems to be in the air, and the Germans are uneasy. . . . I tell all the Frenchmen this news at once. They are overjoyed. Is this the beginning of the end? . . .

March 25.—A bombastic *communiqué* in the Germano-Turkish style has announced the destruction of the *Bouvet* to jubilant crowds. Poor old ironclad, which I have so often seen riding at anchor in Toulon harbour!

If this news be true we will accept it calmly. Our sailors will have done their duty. Their courage is well known. So no regrets. Long live France, again and always!

March 28.—I could write this cry if we might not utter it. Good news: just when the *Bouvet* was disappearing under the waters, here, close to us, in Alsace, on Hartmannsweilerkopf, our Alpine soldiers and our infantry were gaining a victory. For it was a victory!

The bells were silent in their stone sheaths,

but our hearts exulted. To Strasburg! To Strasburg!

April 2.—The Curé tells me a strange story to-day. Our presence at Metz—I refer to those who have lost a limb, and in general to those unfit for further service—was unknown to the higher authorities. They believed us to be in France, as the following telegram received by the head doctor shows: "Your question is meaningless; the wounded in question were sent back to France on the occasion of the recent exchange of prisoners." The head doctor had asked if the Metz ambulances were to provide appliances for us.

Charming answer!

April 3.—A new journal has appeared among us. It is distributed in the wards, gratuitously. This so-called *Gazette des Ardennes* seems to have neither editor nor office. It is a collection of news items, all specially chosen to discourage the French prisoners and the inhabitants of the districts invaded by the enemy. On the back of this wretched rag a list of French prisoners with their names and addresses has been begun to-day. The object of the publication is very clearly shown in an appeal to our people on the first page; it is to show them that their Government is deceiving them as to the number of prisoners taken, etc.

We collected most of these papers without comment, and put them in the place best suited to them!

April 4.—Another piece of good news, this time from Austria. Przemysl fell the day before yesterday.

The *communiqué* is very brief: 50,000 men, it says, have fallen into the hands of the Russians. The newspapers are more explicit; they own to 80,000 men. The guns are destroyed; all the forts were blown up before the town surrendered. Then they make the following calculation: this 80,000 includes some 30,000 workmen and 20,000 *employés*, hospital attendants, cooks, grooms, etc. . . . Further, we are to subtract all the wounded undergoing treatment in the hospitals of the town, at least 30,000. I do the sum, and find: 80,000 − 80,000 = 0.

So it would seem that the Russians took no military prisoners, not even an artilleryman, an infantryman, or an engineer. Only workmen, grooms, and doctors. And the Governor himself was, I suppose, a groom! Can the Germans really be so stupid as to believe all this?

April 7.—The Berlin pastor has been to see me again, but he has changed his tone. He is no longer the proud German, confident of

German victory. He is a calculator whose figures have been upset by a new factor. For he is in great fear of Italy.

"The Italians will never attack France. I know it, I am quite sure of it."

I should hope so indeed!

On the other hand, he foresees their intervention very soon, and against Germany. He cannot find adjectives enough to condemn their abominable conduct. He does not stay very long with me, for he is not in his usual spirits. But, before going, he delivers himself of a theological opinion (?). We had spoken of Ypres and the English. He had described the fighting there as of the most desperate character.

"No more prisoners," he declared at last. "The Bavarians kill everybody. The English do the same."

And when I remark quietly that this is a wholly unchristian method of warfare, he replies simply:

"*The Hebrews did it. Read their history again. They put their vanquished enemies, Gentiles or Amalekites, to the sword.*"

His Christianity is really making progress.

April 13.—The Russians are still advancing. They seem to have consolidated their position in the Carpathians. The newspapers speak of an army to be sent to repulse them, to open

the road that leads to Budapest, and then drive all the Russians out of Galicia.

April 14.—Infinite joy, almost too great. An order has come. All the unfit and the infirm are to be examined this evening. There is to be an exchange of prisoners on May 2 or 3. We are to go to Constance to wait, leaving here to-morrow.

The same day, evening.—A terrible disappointment. The prisoners leave to-morrow, but seven of us are to remain here: a shoemaker, a geometrician, an office clerk, three non-commissioned officers, and I. It is a cruel decree, and the reason given is absurd.

"You can be made useful," said the General. "And then the French do the same. They keep our educated men."

I shrugged my shoulders, regardless of his rank. We came back slowly to our wards.

All around us is the stir of departure. Those who are going are cheerful. They pity us, no doubt, but their joy is irrepressible, and, after all, so natural. I try to smile to them, but my heart is full of anguish, grief, and trouble. Five of our seven have lost a limb, and should unquestionably have been included. . . . The orderlies and Doctor W. . . ., who passes through the ward, make clumsy jests about my gloomy face.

April 15.—A sleepless, miserable night. This morning I am calm. I have scribbled a few hasty words to my people and given them to R. . . . In Switzerland or at Lyons, he will post them.

My pride has enabled me to recover from my surprise and depression of yesterday. And I have reason to be proud. I thought myself a useless cripple, only fit to live out my remaining days in peace and oblivion. And the Germans undeceive me. They are afraid of my words. Then up once more, as on the night of the attack: for Her, for my Country! It is so easy to fight and fall, so brief and so simple. A lasting duty is nobler still. Learn to suffer without complaint, and take the path of exile.

April 20.—My six comrades and I are told off for the camps. We have been examined. The head doctor said to me quite amiably:

"Do not envy your comrades. They are all going to Corsica. In France people do not like to see too many mutilated men about."

I did not answer. The statement is so absurd. Then he added:

"You are not going to a camp. I have every reason to believe that all men who have lost a limb like you will be sent to hospitals."

I kept silence. Have I not heard on very

good authority that there are many mutilated prisoners in the German camps ?

April 23.—The *Lothringer Zeitung* informs its readers that the French aviator Garros has fallen and been taken prisoner. The writer of the note in question improves the occasion by observing that recently German aviators in our lines had been ill-treated by the French troops, beaten and insulted, but that great Germany would behave very differently to the French hero. He will enjoy all the rights permitted by the military conventions, which regulate the lot of prisoners with humanity.

Yes, *Boche humanity* ! . . . We know what that is.

April 25.—I am rigged out again. I have an almost new military overcoat, a pair of civilian trousers, and a student's cap. I have got quite a decent boot from the clothing *dépôt* for 2 francs. The whole of one room under the roof is full of Belgian boots, taken from the barracks at Liége and Namur. The German soldiers sell these boots to us. . . . I look almost like an infantryman.

April 26.—When shall we start ?

I climbed up to the attics of the old seminary yesterday evening, for the last time. N. . . . came with me. Our eyes wandered restlessly over the town. The melancholy of departure

saddened our hearts. I felt a kind of vague distress.

Here we have groaned, here we have suffered; here our hearts have matured, have risen up to duty. And to us Metz represents our hard apprenticeship, the highest stage, that which one can make but once. The blood we have shed also forms bands, strong though slender, between this town and France. I stretch my arms out vaguely. I long to seize the town, whose immeasurable distress under German domination becomes acute and tangible to me. The barbaric inscriptions that dishonour the roofs, the flags, and pennons on the buildings are the externals of the city. Its heart is French. I feel it unforgettably at this moment. All its Colette Baudoches rise up in the night. The silence to which they are condemned does not prevent their souls from speaking to mine. I have a perception of their entity, the outcome of grave expectation, reasoned hope and gentleness. From all the windows, dark and light, brave, steadfast voices seem to rise to us. And their love-song is sublime: "We wept," they say, "when you fell, mowed down by the machine-guns. We would fain have nursed you with our sisterly hands, and dressed your cruel wounds. They would not let us. Our hearts are yours. We have seen you some-

times from our windows, when *capotes* and *képis* mustered in the great courtyard, on the eve of departure, and the sight was our greatest joy. At night, when you were sleeping, if the sound of guns broke in upon our dream, that dream which forty-five years have not availed to dispel, our French lips murmured words of prayer, and wafted them towards you. . . . Go now undismayed. Go to meet suffering with the courage of the strong. We do not fear it, yet we are weaker than you. Our thoughts will follow you into exile. We will pray to the God of France—the only God, Giver of grace, eternal Guardian of Faith, Justice, the rights of men and nations—for you and for us, for the victory which will make us once more your loving and pious sisters."

The murmur steals into my soul, and I too pray, looking away from earth to the blue heaven above us.

V. AT OFFENBURG IN BADEN

April 29. *Rastatt. Five o'clock.* — It is already broad daylight. We left Metz yesterday evening. The station was empty. No passenger trains on the lines. Convoys of wounded passed through the great hall at short intervals. One of these took us in. We found places at the end of a third-class coach. Sufficiently comfortable.

Starting about 6 o'clock, we passed through the suburbs and were soon in the open country. The train stopped everywhere. A French name, Courcelles, attracted my attention. On each side of the line are important defensive works. The ground is wonderfully well utilized. There are endless trenches, little forts, mined tracts. The barbed wire is in place. But the trenches are empty. The soldiers are farther off, on the other side of the town, towards Mousson. Night soon falls. There are interminable waits in silent stations. Frequent bifurcations. We are now forbidden to try and read the names of the stations through which we pass.

The service on the train is not carried out

by the guard. Volunteers undertake this duty —civilians, to be more exact. Their chief is an old doctor. They go from Karlsruhe to Conflans and return every three days. We get plenty of food; light meals are served frequently; tea every two hours. The night seemed very long. . . .

We are now waiting for further orders at Rastatt. Some of the wounded have been taken out, about fifty. Is there a prisoners' camp in the town? and are we to stay here? No. The train starts again. It is nearly six o'clock. We are going towards Karlsruhe, across a vast plain. The soil seems fertile. There is very little animation on the line; yet this is the railway for Strasburg. After a while, we pull up in the station of Offenburg. This is a pretty little town, with gardens and shady trees. The bluish spurs of a chain of mountains are faintly outlined against the sky. It must be the Black Forest. We remain stationary for a long time. . . . Curious groups peer at the train. Doctors in uniform pass up and down incessantly.

Presently a curt order is given. We get out. It is a painful process, for they took away our crutches before we left Metz. So some of us, the cripples, have to hop along on the pavement as best we can. There are

twenty-eight of us from Metz, and to these have been added twenty or twenty-two comrades fresh from the front, from Les Éparges, nearly all very seriously wounded. We question them in the waiting-room. It was nothing; just a surprise of two French sections, and the petty success of the enemy was dearly bought.

Installed in a light and cheerful room, I begin to recover from my fatigue. A kindly, smiling Swiss priest, who is passing through the town, takes our names and addresses. He will write to our families for us to-morrow when he arrives at Geneva. "You are in a reserve hospital," he tells me; "you will be very comfortable." I look round in surprise. The building is a new one, a primary school on an open square, to the right of a large church. There are trees all around. No walls, as at Metz. We are no longer in a prison. To the right and behind, a street; in front and to the left, the square.

Childish voices twitter in a neighbouring school. The Sisters, young women in nurses' caps, speak to us pleasantly. The doctor himself, a tall fellow with slightly grizzled hair, laughs good-naturedly with his new patients. Are we really to have some rest and calm after the storm? Have our sufferings at Metz earned a little peace for us?

May 3.—I have allowed several days to pass. It would have been childish to set down my first impressions at once. After the dark hours at San Klemens the very sun here seems a new thing. However, the normal Frenchman is a simple, spontaneous, uncalculating creature. He is easily touched and often by unworthy objects. Then he realizes his mistake, and his awakening is rude. I will therefore merely note the enormous difference between the methods in force here and at San Klemens.

San Klemens suggests rigour, scorn, and insult, sometimes cruelty, often injustice. Offenburg suggests calm, a moderate discipline, exact, but without fury, smiling faces, gentle hands.

The material situation also shows great improvement. We have plenty of food, carefully prepared. True, it is largely composed of potatoes, but they are at least wholesome. There is sugar in the coffee, the meat is always fresh, the sausages appetizing. We have dessert sometimes and salad often ; on Fridays, sweet rice and stewed prunes or cherries. No more bran and barley broth. My comrades are delighted.

A bathroom of five compartments is open to the French patients. I remember reading in a German paper at Metz the vehement outcry of a Prussian officer interned at Riom. He

declared that he had only been able to get a bath once in five months. Well, Herr Offizier, among your countrymen during the same length of time at San Klemens, Metz, I washed my only foot twice in cold water, and never had a bath at all. This was not because of the state of my wound, for at Montigny, in November, I was given a bath three times! Exile is a dreary business!

At Offenburg, too, we are allowed clean shirts. At Metz we had to wear them a month.

May 5.—A long talk with the doctor attached to the hospital. He is a man of forty, strongly built and intelligent-looking. His thick hair is turning grey at the temples. The inevitable scar adorns his right cheek, and he is a strong partisan of duelling. I will not set down all the arguments he brought forward. We discussed the war, and they were *pro domo*. But the refrain was invariable: Germany is sure to conquer. Then this sincere (?) expression of regret:

"Why, oh! why did you dream of the *revanche*? Why did you not accept the hand we held out to you in friendship after 1870?"

These conquerors are artless folk. I instanced Jena.

"Why did you not take the course you recommend for France on that occasion?"

He shakes his imperious head.

"The case was different. We were not amalgamated. The German-speaking peoples had perforce to realize their magnificent national unity."

"And they did it in blood."

He checked me with a scornful gesture:

"Force, you see, is the eternal lever. You don't think so, but this is beside the question. We shall soon see which will conquer, French Right or German Might. Rights are only words. Might dominates, destroys, and replaces them. They cry out at first, then they hold their peace . . . as you will do."

May 6.—The Sister in charge is very kind. Her name is Arnolda. When she bids us "*Gute Nacht!*" from the threshold at bedtime we scarcely dare to answer, and so break into the exquisite harmony of these syllables. Her voice is crystal clear, her laugh marvellously sweet, ringing out for all sorts of trifles. She has the hands of a fairy who has learnt what pain is. She is a Christian too, not as people are Christians in Germany, but as they must be in heaven. "*Nicht wie ich will, lieber Gott, aber wie Du willst, nicht wahr?*" ("Not my will, but Thine be done, dear God") she murmured in her gentle voice, in answer to some rough words spoken by one of the orderlies

touching the duration of the war and its surprises.

This phrase is characteristic of her. Sister Arnolda cannot hate.

May 7.—We spend peaceful days. We are allowed to have tobacco, pipes, and tinder-boxes. In the evening, about six o'clock, we seat ourselves at the windows that overlook the street and smoke in silence.

Children chatter and play under the leafy trees. Light silhouettes soon make their appearance at the windows opposite. Offenburg seems so far to have been but little affected by the grave and terrible hours through which we have passed. The little town dozes in its nest of verdure, for it has no industries, if we except a single factory of ornamental glass. It is peopled by railway officials and *employés* ; the station is an important one. There is already a very noticeable lack of horses. The milkmen bring round their cans in the morning on two-horse carts. But one of the beasts has gone. The pole rubs against the flank of the remaining partner, and the vehicle jolts along as best it may. The street cabs are in the same plight.

I see very few young men ; there are old men and women ; a great many young girls, mostly fair, a few dark-haired ; an incredible number

of children. One of our orderlies—we call him the *Lehrer*, because he used to teach at Freiburg—points them out proudly: "*La jeune Allemagne est beaucoup.*" Here is an interesting detail: 80 per cent. of these little ones, boys and girls alike, go to school barefoot. I see big girls of thirteen or fourteen carrying their shoes in their hands, with their stockings tucked into their satchels. It is a measure of hygiene, we are told.

We see a great many soldiers. A whole regiment is garrisoned here: ordinary infantry. Numerous recruits are being drilled at present. We get a visit from them about seven o'clock in the evening. They pass in compact groups. Beardless boys, for the most part; their heads only are characteristically German. Their bodies are small or of medium size. Here and there we note crooked legs, or a humpback whose uniform fails to give him a martial air. I had heard it before, but now I have seen it: all is fish that comes to the Boche net.

The Landsturm classes are in great force. They mount guard over the railways. They wear a leather tunic, a cap of the same, velveteen trousers, and high boots. Their rifles are not up to date. They are needle-guns.

May 8.—A new intervention. I am to be operated on this evening. I have been in pain

for some time. The jagged bone was pushing terribly against the thin cicatrice. I showed it to the doctor. He seemed greatly surprised, passing his hand again and again over the flesh.

"Who did this for you?"

I explain.

"It can't be left like this. I will put it right for you, for our own credit's sake."

I say in vain that I want to be left in peace.

"No, no, it's really necessary. It is for your sake as well as ours. You would always be suffering."

I agree without enthusiasm. He explains; he must take a few centimetres off the bone, that is all. His confidence in his power to correct the Metz surgeon's error and his assurances touch me. He is a competent practitioner. His reputation is high and extends far beyond Offenburg.

May 9.—In bed again. For how many weeks?

They had some difficulty in putting me to sleep. Sister Arnolda held the mask. Just at that ultimate moment of consciousness before the plunge into oblivion, I heard her voice as in a dream, murmuring:

"*Gute Nacht, Herr. Schlafen Sie wohl.*" ("Good night, sir. Sleep well.")

It was she I saw bending over me when I awoke. Her gay laugh greeted me:

"*Fertig! Sie sind fertig mit Schmerzen.*" ("It's all over now. No more pain for you.")

May 12.—I have not written at any length since those four days.

The Germans admit that the French have advanced on the south-west of Metzeral. On the rest of the front the situation remains unchanged. For the last ten days each *communiqué* has contained a phrase almost in the same terms, the true significance of which had escaped us. "In this attack the hostile troops used asphyxiating shells very freely." This phrase was always used in connexion with the news from Arras, Ypres, etc. The adjective varies; sometimes we read of *stupefying* gas. Yesterday it was vomitive gas. The word made us laugh. But to-day we no longer laugh. A Lausanne paper, eight or ten days old, thrown in at the window, also speaks of an attack and of asphyxiating gas. Only this time the guilty parties are not our men, but the Germans! And then I suddenly grasp the meaning of their insistence! That little phrase, which seemed so insignificant, was designed to stifle the sympathies of the neutral States! It preceded the introduction of poison. It announced it but at the same time reserved to itself the nobler part. "After you, French gentlemen!" Hypocrites and villains! As

if France had need of crime to help her! The breasts of her soldiers, the audacity of her generals, the courage of all, are the things on which she relies for victory! . . . Chemistry has given her her shells, but these are brilliant, audible, and visible in their effects. Germany, for her part, has degraded herself. She has called in the help of poisons that kill craftily, that creep in heavy clouds, streaked with yellow, slyly and as if ashamed towards the enemy's trenches and, seizing our *poilus* by the throat, choke the life out of them.

I have said nothing of the articles overflowing with pride and hatred which the newspapers have devoted ever since February to the blockade. A few trawlers have disappeared, a few fishing-smacks have been sent to the bottom, the result is negligible. The more so as it is evident from the figures given by the German Admiralty that the trade of English ports has not been interrupted. Fifteen hundred sailing vessels and steamers enter or leave these ports in the course of a week. And the average of those sunk by submarines is one a day!

To-day, however, there is immense jubilation. The *Lusitania*, the sister ship of the *Titanic*, and a monster of the same dimensions, has been sent to the bottom! Noël!

The bells are pealing! Great Germany is happy!

There are not many details as yet. But it is supposed that the victims were very numerous. The newspapers plead the cause of the aggressors in advance. The vessel had guns. They bring forth from their indictment an agreement entered into before the war, binding the company to which the liner belonged to the British Admiralty. This "scrap of paper" is said to have stipulated that in case of war all the vessels of the company would be considered light cruisers and armed with guns. Besides, the passengers were warned at New York, under the instructions of Count von Bernstorff, the German Ambassador, of the risk they ran in making the voyage in this ship. It was certain to be torpedoed.

Here there are general rejoicings. The orderlies exult. The doctor himself is delighted!

His frame of mind is revolting to me. It is in vain that he tends me benevolently, repairing as far as possible the infamy committed at Metz, that he shows a broad spirit of toleration to my comrades! His talk exasperates me! I find him too intensely German.

May 14.—The fever has left me. I can raise myself on my elbow now. I am regaining

strength rapidly. Every evening I smoke a big pipe. And it is then that Doctor H. . . . inevitably appears to weary me.

All our comrades gather round, and the argument begins afresh. To-day he brings the *communiqué* of yesterday evening. Our troops are said to have occupied the village of Carency, after terrible assaults. The battle is still raging furiously round Souchez. The account is very vague in tone. One is conscious of a certain embarrassment, the same reticence as was shown in writing of the battle of Arras. It is not the great victory which will deliver us. It is one of the thousand victories that will compose this. I say so to the doctor, and it makes him laugh.

In spite of the fact that I appreciate him, that I know his German mask conceals a certain amount of heart, I say harsh things then. My retorts sting him. I see this and I regret it. But he is really so very Boche! Why does he shrug his shoulders when glorious Belgium is evoked? Why does he show such execrable scorn and utter such cruel words at the mention of this little people which so bravely sacrificed its present tranquillity to its eternal honour?

Honour! This word exasperates him, and in spite of this I insist upon it, I repeat it

emphatically, delighting to find images that touch the hearts of my French comrades in the twilight. We bombard each other with curt phrases :

" You violated Belgium."

" I no longer recognize such a place as Belgium."

" You may not, but will not History ? "

" We are the people who write history."

" The world will execrate you ; you will be despised."

" Fear will work for us."

" The name of German will spell liar ! "

" Nay, rather power, will."

" Cunning, duplicity."

" Courage, hope of victory."

" Failure to keep her plighted word."

" A clear vision of her true interests."

He does not lose his temper. And this is really terrible. It is in vain that I goad him as a bull is goaded in the arena, and hurl cruel, stinging words at him ; his placidity disarms me.

He speaks of France, of a sincere friendship uniting our countries later on. That would be magnificent.

" Do you think it possible ? "

I answer roughly, " No."

" Why ? "

" For many reasons, one of which is horrible : France cannot and never will be able to forget. Belgium and Louvain, Reims, Arras, Lunéville, all that you have destroyed, would rise from the wreck, to hurl at a government base enough to seal such a compact, the only word that could fitly describe it : that of traitor to the Fatherland ! "

A brutal laugh marks the close of my sentence.

" Words ! Words ! "

" Words, but solemn words, such as with us make the mighty people bound as under the stroke of the lash. Words which will fire souls and increasing courage tenfold, set aside the pact by which you would seek to associate the honour of a race with the deep dishonour of Germany ! "

" But think of your own interests ? . . . If France's independence and the life of the country were in question ? Admit that if you would break with England, if you would leave the Russians to fend for themselves in the East, we should conquer, and very soon. France would be the gainer. She would certainly be better off than if the Triple Entente were to win a decisive victory this very day."

" But she would lose her world-reputation for honour and for honesty."

"What if we gave you money, India, a little of Egypt?"

I looked him straight in the face. My anger died out.

"France, *Monsieur le Docteur*, desires to remain honourable. France is a gallant man, and so will struggle to the end. God will not allow us to be beaten, but even if that should come to pass, there is not a Frenchman who would not prefer to see France fallen from her place of power, disappearing in beauty, wept by all nations, saluted by people of feeling, rather than to know her perjured, guilty in the eyes of the world of having been false to her honour and to ours."

"Then you are fighting for honour?"

"Yes, *Monsieur le Docteur*, and that is our glory. You talk of interest, and ours was plain enough: we might have left Russia to her fate in the relentless grip with which you were closing upon her on the West. England would have remained calm. But a sacred treaty, one of those documents which France does not treat as 'scraps of paper,' bore her signature. We honoured that signature and we shall do so to the end."

The doctor ceased to laugh, and my comrades applauded. They had forgotten their prudence. I feared an outburst. But the

doctor seemed amused. After a brief silence, he spoke of getting leave for us to go down into the courtyard for an hour every day, a project which pleased us all.

A few more commonplace phrases, and he went off, looking a little uneasy perhaps.

May 16.—A letter from Agnès tells me that our Benjamin has enlisted in an engineer corps. Class 17 has just been called up for examination. He thought he would be left too long, he would not wait. There are three of us now with the colours. Dear boy, God keep you! His action moves me more deeply than I can say. If he should meet his death in the field, should I not feel myself in some measure to blame?

No. My enlistment prepared the way for his perhaps, but I am not responsible. And if he had consulted me I should have approved. Go, my little "pioneer," go, my André, onward to Victory! It is promised to you and your like, who, having no share in our faults—those of men of my age, and the generation before us—lift up your pure and youthful hands towards it. The true glory will be yours. The radiant and successful France of to-morrow will not be ours. You will make it and protect it against possible attack. *We* were blind. We dreamt of the happiness of mankind, and we threw down our

barriers. It was a fair dream, no doubt, but it was powerless. No one was made happy by it, and it almost compassed the death of France.

May 17.—The doctor sulked for three days. He has come back now, accompanied by a Herr Professor, a blond gentleman, with upturned moustaches, a figure above the average height; gold on his half-closed eyes and in his mouth! He wears a grey felt hat and a coat and trousers of a delightful olive-green tint.

The introduction is brief.

"Herr Professor X. . . . of Offenburg."

The Herr bends himself double.

"This is the patriot of whom I told you, a volunteer soldier who does not love our country!"

The Herr Professor examines me. Presently he opens the attack. His French is correct, his elocution rather slow.

"You do not know Germany. You Frenchmen scoff at her heaviness, her lack of elegance, brilliance, and distinction, which, however, are counterbalanced by reflection, and by very great qualities. Your newspapers are witty enough. You have many superficial graces. But we have depth. And you call us 'barbarians.'"

His distress is sincere. I am sorry to

disturb the limpidity of this soul. I do so, however, but not too ruthlessly.

"Come, Herr Professor, what about Belgium? Talk to me about Louvain."

He pulls a newspaper out of his pocket, and shows me a long article: according to the German telegrams, it was the civilians who caused the destruction of the little town by firing on the troops. And did not the Kaiser's soldiers, the "barbarians," themselves rush into the flames to save its treasures? All that remains in the way of architecture as a sublime testimony to an imperishable art, was saved by the German troopers. I can but smile. The Herr Professor is annoyed.

"You don't believe our newspapers?"

I might answer that this is my duty as a Frenchman and a soldier. I prefer to set forth the reasons for looking upon their Press as suspect, and to cite Reims, Arras, and the many martyred towns which bear witness to the German army's fatal habit of burning and destroying.

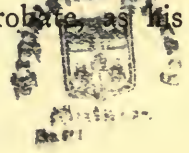
The conversation continues. The Herr Professor now goes into the causes of the war:

"It is for her existence, for her future life, for commercial liberty that Germany is shedding the precious blood of her sons, and

not for her aggrandizement. Our territories are large enough for us."

I insist upon the well-known projects of an imbecile Pan-Germanism, the boundless ambitions of the German League in the naval, military, and colonial domains. I recognize Germany's right to battle for her life, but I point out that this very right implies respect for like rights among neighbouring nations. Now who wished for war? Who had been making ready for it for a long time? Who was brutal without cause, cynical without excuse? Was it not Germany, with her formidable army, her powerful navy, her arrogant diplomacy? If the blood of her sons be indeed precious to her, why is she shedding it at this moment, and why, after the Serajevo affair, did she not bring pressure to bear upon her ally, Austria, when London and Paris were making sincere efforts to avert the danger? . . . Who let loose the horrors of war in August, assuming the crushing responsibility of the decisive act for all time, in the sight of God and of History? Who, at that moment, denied Belgium's right to be honest and valiant, to live her true life, to defend her sacred and inviolable soil heroically?

The Herr Professor takes thought. Is he going to justify the act I reprobate, as his



Government did last December? No, he passes this over, and quotes the ancient law of atoms which seek each other and blend. Germany was strong. All small States are an anomaly when they adjoin great States powerfully armed and organized. They are bound to disappear, to be absorbed some day. As to Germany's military preparations, who can reproach her for them? Russia, who has been engaged for ten years in strengthening and remodelling her formidable army? England, disturbed by the immense naval progress of Germany? Revengeful France, who showed her hand by voting the return to the law of three years' military service? Thus is history written! Dates, facts, and figures count for little. The only thing that really matters is the conception a man may have of it, when that man is a German! He speaks with power. The zealot in him reveals himself. His flushed face and imperious gestures betray the emotion of the prophet:

"And what does all this matter? Such a war needs no apologies. We have violated Belgium. Who will cast this in our teeth if we are the victors? I tell you this is the great period. The world has never seen, will never see anything like it. Look at the West; we are not in Paris, but we hold the North, the

plains of Champagne, the Argonne, and the Woëvre. Our advance on the East is still more dramatic: we are overthrowing the Russians, we are about to march upon Przemysl, for Galicia lies open to us. We will purge it of our enemies. Warsaw will fall, Lemberg and Riga will be taken. The month of August will see us victorious, dictating terms at Petrograd, free to move our forces elsewhere. When Russia is muzzled, your efforts against Constantinople will become useless. It is already costing you dear! France will realize that to continue this war would be to court disaster. She will treat with us, undoubtedly. England will be crushed, shorn of her fleet and her wonderful colonies. Then, and then only, will we sheathe the sword. War will be no longer possible. Austria is already German. Our armies will be common, our trade and finance will be one. We shall hold a power that nothing can shatter. Peace will be eternal. Even our enemies will then admit that our German victory was indispensable. This is the hour of fate. German *Kultur* had to be universally imposed sooner or later. We are the first in science; our philosophy has never been surpassed; our literature is sound. We shall diffuse it all. The future is ours.

We shall be the friends and protectors of weak nations (!). Those who have held aloof will come to us some day. I tell you that we made this war for the world, for a lofty purpose, to destroy war for ever. And I ask you in my turn: do we need an excuse? . . . Do you not understand that our end is magnificent?"

The visit has lasted two hours. The doctor is getting impatient. He knows me; he does not hope to convert me. He answers for me:

"No, Herr Professor. The only desirable victory is the victory of France and our enemies! At least, that is what my patient thinks. He believes in it firmly."

The Herr Professor is greatly distressed. His astonishment amuses me.

"You can still believe in it? After all I have said?"

"Even more, perhaps. I believe in it because I desire it, because I am sure of myself and of my will, and because I know that France will resist to the end."

"But think of our successes! Of our military strength, of your broken offensive, your futile efforts to pierce a loosely held front?"

"Those successes will not make any difference in the end. Strength is a reality, but so is attrition. France bides her time, and that time will come!"

May 19.—Such a joy! I have been given some books, and what is more, French books. I devour them eagerly. La Fontaine's *Fables*, Madame de Staël's book on Germany, our great Musset's *Poésies Nouvelles*, Voltaire's *Siècle de Louis XIV;* Molière, Racine, Corneille! I have *Le Cid*! My delight is almost childish.

Oh! the intoxication of the word, the phrase! I know all these works through having discussed, attacked, or defended them. I have the delightful impression of having suddenly discovered them! I had read them very badly. Can one read aright at fifteen? Now I am enchanted. Imagine reading Musset in a German hospital while the attendants grind out their harsh syllables! All France is in this poetry, the France we love, with its talent, its genius, its limpid, flexible tongue, the gleaming ornament laid by sparkling wit on an idea. And here is Alphonse Daudet himself, for *Jack* is in my hands, the *Contes de Lundi* and *Sapho* lie on the table! It is too much joy for one day.

Ah! all those who would belittle our great writers, all those terrible young people who deal in the negation of talent, should come and air their disdainful theories in the land of exile. Let the Frenchmen who cannot admire

Hugo eat the bitter bread of German prisons, and read the Napoleonic epic within their walls!

May 20.—We are passing through a period of gloom. The German newspapers are exultant. The Russians are retreating, Przemysl is threatened, at least so the doctor tells us. Still, we do not lose faith in final victory.

There is great and growing irritation with regard to the possible intervention of Italian troops. It seems that there is a connexion between the German effort beyond the Carpathians and von Bülow's visits to the Italian capital. The majority of the newspapers speak of tension between Italy and Austria, though they do not yet believe there will be war.

May 22.—It is a fact. I have the *Extrablatt*. It is printed in black on pink paper. It gives the declaration of war. The Italian Ambassador at Vienna must have left the capital by this time. The sober commentaries of the Press are in strong contrast to the anger of the people. "Italy a traitor to her word! Italy violating the treaty by which she was bound but yesterday to the Central Empires. Italy turning pirate, playing the part of the third thief!" These expressions recur again

and again. The *Frankfurter Zeitung* alone simply points out that the intervention is really of small importance. Italy's activities will be localized. The statement that 500,000 Italians will be concentrated at Turin to reinforce the French front evokes a smile from the great paper. Germany's interests, however, make it essential that she should avoid a rupture. She has to think of Rumania, strengthened by her treaty with Italy. This treaty, being defensive only, will not necessitate her participation. But should Germany intervene, the whole apparatus would be upset.

Meanwhile the populace stamps and sings and drinks and shouts. Crowds surge round the troops which march through the streets. An infantry battalion is to entrain to-day for Austria. Flowers in the muzzles of their rifles. Flowers round their helmets. Germans, lift up your hearts! The doctor adds this laughingly to his paraphrase of a famous saying: "Our enemies are so numerous that even the sun cannot behold them all at once!" I catch him up, however, sharply enough: Did he not speak of honour, of lying, perjured Italy? "Treachery!" Scarcely has the word passed his lips when I remind him of Leipzig.

"What did the Saxons do that day? And do any of you ever make it a reproach to them? Yet they behaved as traitors, basely and ignobly; they betrayed their ally at the moment of conflict; they were not, like the Italians, the masters of their swords, free at last to follow and realize their national aspirations."

"The case was very different."

I am accustomed to this answer. The case is always different for *them*, for everything is permissible to strength, and nothing is sacred in its eyes. He goes on to explain Austria's plan of campaign.

"They will have an important army, one-third German. We are sending soldiers to them, but these soldiers are volunteers. They will wear the Austrian uniform. Our army will take the offensive. In a few weeks we shall be at Venice."

"Venice! Great Heaven!"

A mischievous demon spurs me on, and I cannot refrain from saying:

"Well, of course, after Louvain, Venice! When shall you destroy it?

He is quite unconscious of my irony.

"There is a very important arsenal at Venice. It is a fortified town."

He seems quite serious. I long to bite him.

May 26.—Just as I expected. Venice has been bombarded. The German *communiqué* lays stress on the arsenal. The bombs fell on some defensive works. . . . But I don't believe it. My hatred broods over imaginary details. Hatred? Yes, how is it possible not to hate such dangerous monsters. After Louvain, Venice. What artist will ever be able to forgive them?

May 29.—An Alsatian non-commissioned officer, who was on duty for two months on the Dutch frontier, confides this secret to me:

"When we have conquered we ought to show our gratitude to Holland. She has done a great deal for us without counting the cost. As we do not command the seas, we required a country capable of revictualling us under her flag. That country was Holland. She has colonies, so it was an easy matter for her. The enemy's navy was obliged to let the products of her colonies pass into her ports. This enabled us to import a moderate quantity of corn, rice, cocoa, tea, and raw materials. Of course this little country could not have fed the whole German nation single-handed. But the Germans are very abstemious. By adopting a scale of rations as early as December last they have lacked nothing. And now the harvest is at hand."

"According to you then," I said, "without the support of Holland, would Germany have been able to hold out till the coming harvest?"

"No, I don't think so. She might have done so up to a certain point, one month, or perhaps two. But famine would have been inevitable."

"Then what will Germany's resources be for another year?"

"First of all her harvest. But this is insufficient. We have always imported largely, and now that is impossible. Germany, moreover, must have consumed her reserves of cereals, macaronies, and meat. The national stock of cattle is greatly diminished. All the beasts in Belgium and in the north of France were slaughtered on the spot, or sent to our country. True, orders have been given that the sowing of corn should be carried out in the invaded countries. But we must remember that the result will be very meagre. The population of these districts will have to be fed by the Empire. My personal conviction, which takes all these facts into account, is, that the talk of famine beyond the Rhine is greatly exaggerated, and in any case premature. The danger is not very pressing. But it certainly exists, and becomes more and more urgent as time passes. Will it materialize

in February, in March, or in April? The Germans themselves could not tell you. But I know they are nervous. . . ."

I record these statements without emphasizing them further.

May 30.—More German successes on the Russian frontier! They overwhelm us with incredible details. The Russian soldiers have no rifles; they cannot be victualled, etc. The bells are pealing, flags are hung out. The doctor is not behindhand. With a large map in his hand, he explains the German tactics, shows us the pincers, which are to be extended from Galicia to Riga, to squeeze the Russian armies.

It seems as if Hindenburg were losing some of his popular prestige. Mackensen is apparently eclipsing him. There are post cards innumerable with the portrait of the latest hero.

June 2.—A grocer's shop has been opened just across the street, and the proprietress sets out fruit on the pavement. Cherries first of different kinds; pale pink shining ones, large sweet red ones, bigarreaux from the Black Forest and even the large black variety; then bananas and nuts.

The German convalescents come and go incessantly between the hospital and this shop;

for 20 pfennige they get a large bag of the dazzling cherries. And they eat them under our windows, throwing the stones up towards us with a mocking gesture.

My philosophy comes to my aid. I try to forget the cherries. I shut the window, but I cannot forget the spectacle of the beautiful forbidden fruit, pale or crimson, and very tantalizing on its bed of leaves. My comrades are annoyed. It was in vain that they tried yesterday for a whole hour to sound the orderly on duty:

"Buy cherries? Oh, we should not dare to allow that!"

M. . . . becomes almost neurasthenic over the affair, and on every side I hear the refrain of the mocking desire: "Just to taste cherries again, even if it were only once."

Small desires, small troubles.

June 3.—Another visitor: this time a Strasburg Professor, a man of a certain age, more interesting than his Offenburg colleague. He says that "he loves France in all her good aspects." He does not conceal his surprise at our valour.

"I did not credit you with such powers of endurance. We reckoned too much on French nerves. We know now that those nerves are solid, tough, finely tempered."

This, however, will not avail us much. Our defeat is inevitable. He pities noble France. The praises he bestows on her end with this expression of regret:

"Your place was by our side. France and Germany working in unison would have meant the consolidation of a splendid domination, the peaceful expansion of all that is great, cultivated, beautiful, and noble."

Great, cultivated, beautiful, and noble! I take all that for France. . . . He confesses in an undertone that he was rather advanced in his ideas, I might say democratic, but that since the war, Prussian militarism has ceased to alarm him. He has discovered that it is good, useful, and necessary.

We talk of the English. His hatred for them is intense, and he does his best to inoculate me with it.

"Do you believe that after this war, if you should win it, they would give you back Calais?"

Then in a few words he gives me German opinion and popular sentiment as regards the Allies:

"For France, monsieur, our people feel pity; for England, hatred; for Russia, indifference; for Belgium, contempt."

This is all simple enough!

His arguments touching the beginning of the war are by no means convincing. The following is a specimen :

" But, monsieur, the proof that you attacked us first is that your soldiers occupied certain Alsatian villages a week before war was declared."

I laugh heartily.

" What, Herr Professor, how can you, who live at Strasburg, possibly believe this ? "

He stops short, embarrassed, as is very natural. He was away travelling in August of last year. He read the newspapers, and believed them like a good German.

When I speak of History, he says :

" Nations mould their own history. The strong modify it ; the weak submit to it."

When I speak of Might as a despicable means of opposing Right :

" That," he replies, " is the argument of the weak. Only the strong have rights."

And our interview terminates with these symbolic words, worthy to illustrate the philosophy of a Nietzsche :

" Right and might, dear sir, are incompatible. Germany had to choose. She drew the sword. So hurrah for the sword which modifies Right and makes it favourable to us ! "

Really, for a democrat . . .

June 4.—The more I see of them the more *they* exasperate me. They offend my reason, my instinctive sense of the most essential truths, my elementary consciousness of right and wrong, my need of a collective and individual honour. After my daily talks and courteous discussions with the doctor, I am as it were, bruised and distressed. I feel the gulf between us intensely; he, the arrogant German, whose *naïveté* is surprising and disconcerting, whose aphorisms excite repugnance; I, the young Frenchman, prone to illusion, who builds his dream on the threatened foundations of universal law. I confess that I am alarmed. The future looks very dark. Even the prospect of complete victory does not reassure me. The fruits it may yield will not do away with this grave fact: the mighty cohesion of the German race, a cohesion for evil, for brutal aggression upon the nations that surround it, for it is obvious that this *elect people* will only abandon its dream of domination and world-hegemony for a moment. A perversion of instinct, a special education account for this spirit: *Deutschland über Alles* is literally what they feel, and this feeling will endure. It looms large in the matter, a terrible menace for the days after the peace.

The thought of these days makes me anxious:

at present France is a nation in arms, offering a sublime spectacle to the whole world. The war goes on with its transient reverses, victories, and defeats. I know we shall neglect nothing in France that will give us the mastery. But what after this? The German newspapers are full of plans and appeals tending to the one end: the immediate renewal, after the war, of commercial relations with foreign countries, even with those who are the enemies of to-day: but have we considered this question at all? Are Frenchmen busy preparing and concluding weighty agreements, drawing a tight strong net round Germany which will strangle her trade? Will the command of the sea enable our traders to make a notable advance in the race upon which their German rivals will start? . . . I feel somewhat uncertain. I have misgivings too as to the future of Europe, if the present solidarity of the defenders of the right should show fissures as soon as the war is over. For this war will not come to an end with the last battle. It will continue on the less bloody fields of general activity, and our enemies foresee this; nay more, they are preparing for it: even if vanquished and humiliated, they will still believe in force, and they will pursue their ends with the same

ardour. For forgetting nothing of their victories, and learning nothing from their defeats, this people finds in its faith in the argument of the sword cause for pride in the results achieved, and reasons less noble but infinitely dangerous for discounting its vengeance and sharpening its sword for future conflict.

June 5.—I talked for five minutes with an Alsatian notability, by no means Francophile. He complains that the sentiments of the Alsatian *élite* have been greatly modified since the beginning of the war. "No one speaks out," he says. "But the distant thunder of the guns has stirred all hearts, and every one wishes France may be victorious." This admission is interesting in the mouth of a German.

I banter him a little on his passionate devotion to the person of the "Great Kaiser." Just now, when I remarked that it would need a Napoleon to carry out successful operations on so gigantic a front, he answered boldly:

"And how do you know, monsieur, that our Emperor has not the military talent and the valour of a Napoleon?"

I laugh, as may be supposed. Then I tell him the following anecdote, which I heard from a trustworthy source. When William II was proceeding to the front, he passed through

the town of Rethel. But to reduce the risk of "accidents" as much as possible, the Imperial visitor travelled in a motor-car decorated on every side with the emblem of the Red Cross. His escort did the same.

The comparison is amusing. Can one imagine Napoleon hiding in a wagon to escape shells?

June 7.—Doctor H. . . . was in the ward this morning when some parcels came in. A non-commissioned officer opened them on a table in our presence, spread out the contents, and the consignee took possession of them at once. The doctor thereupon lauded the correct behaviour of the German Government. I cited Montigny, the shameful practices of which we were the victims, and the theft of all provisions from the parcels. He opened his eyes widely, and declared himself greatly surprised.

June 8.—Przemysl fell last night. At dawn this morning the porter came into the ward carrying pennons, and the flags of Prussia and of Baden. He laughed as he unfurled them. The doctor came presently and asked: "Am I not a good prophet?" I did not answer, and he did not press the question.

June 12.—I am becoming lazy. I write less and less. I have so little to record. This

morning, however, the doctor came to take me to the office. B. . . . was told to follow me. The *Generalarzt* wanted to hear our complaints about Metz, of which Doctor H. . . . had informed him. I told what I had seen and gave two names. B. . . . gave a third. It was agreed that our declaration should be entered on a form that evening and that an inquiry should be made.

" If the doctors really did this, they deserve to be punished. No one has any right to take away the food sent to the prisoners at Metz, Offenburg, or anywhere else."

June 20.—I am almost well now. I have not noted the stages of my convalescence. One gets so weary of oneself. It is the same routine over and over again. An operation sends you back to bed. Pain grips you once more, then it decreases and finally dies away. One fine day you get up, and life begins anew. I see with satisfaction that the new scar will be much smaller. The bone has never appeared, the nerves are at rest. And I regret most heartily that I did not come straight here from Saint-M. . . .

June 22.—The Germans must be short of benzine, for they are keeping it now for the motors and airships. They use ether to wash wounds at present.

June 23.—What a pity I am not a painter or a caricaturist. Our Frau-Kommando should have the honours of the album. I will try to describe her: height, about 5 ft. 10 in.; width, say, 4½ ft.; this is sufficient, though not quite exact. Nationality: German, at least at present, for her fourth husband was an American. The German, it is true, is like the negro; he may change his name, his climate, and his tongue without ever losing his colour.

The Frau Kommando is very rich, and this is why all the female staff of the establishment is under her orders. Woe to any who rebel! She is a perfect dragon. She hates the French, and is always saying that we are treated too well. The sentries tremble in their military boots when they are called to order by the Frau Kommando.

To give a recent example: Yesterday, about 4 o'clock, we were sitting on our benches. Our outing is always very short, an hour a day, in the square before the church. Some very little children—children have no enemies—were talking prettily to us. The sentry did not interfere. He thought the proceeding harmless. Presently a massive form wedges itself into one of the window-frames, at the risk of remaining a fixture there. A torrent of

abuse pours from its throat, and the sentry, springing to attention, marches us all indoors forthwith. We were stupefied. In the staircase we passed the fury, or rather, we all had to retreat to the landing to leave room for the passage of her huge carcass, and the sentry received a choice addition to the compliments already bestowed on him. I said aloud :

" *Eine Frau Kommando ? . . . Haben Sie das in Deutschland ?* " ("A female commander ? Do you have them in Germany ? ")

The phrase was much appreciated. It was repeated to the lady, and ever since, she darts a withering glance at me whenever we meet in the passage.

June 25.—*Jeanne d'Arc and the Germans.* This promises to be a piquant volume. I hasten to add that though they claim her as a Lorrainer, the admiration expressed by the German Professors for the heroine is not offensive to us. But I want to record the trick I was able to play on the owner of the olive-green suit lately. During the visiting-hour, the Herr Professor advanced smilingly into the ward, preceded by the doctor. After a few commonplace phrases, he explains the object of his visit as follows :

" I have been talking to my older pupils about Jeanne d'Arc and Monsieur Barrès."

I repress a smile.

"Now it seems that there is quite a movement in favour of this heroine in France; it is proposed to award honours to her, which seems to us appropriate, though tardy. We, who are upholders of tradition, do not understand why you have deferred these honours, and I should like you to write me a few pages, giving the reasons for this revival of the worship of the warrior-maid. It would be very convenient for me. I would read them with my pupils."

I am rather puzzled. At first I wonder whether this ingenuous proposal is a trap. I look my man straight in the face. He is eager and interested. His features are too calm to hide some evil design. A mischievous thought flashes through my mind. Wait a bit, Herr Professor. I will satisfy you, or you will be critical indeed.

So smiling amiably, I agree. My notes will be ready this evening, if he will come back about 6 o'clock. I set to work. My comrades peep over my shoulder, much perplexed. I cover seven or eight small sheets, then I read them what I have written. Of course, I touch but very lightly on the distressing causes of French ingratitude—the ingratitude of many Frenchmen—to the heroic shepherdess. What

I try to do is to describe and to justify the emotion of the French people in the presence of the dark hordes which were overrunning their ancient national soil. In a few stern words I paint the anguish and cruelty of invasion; I draw a parallel between the circumstances of those days and of these: France invaded, mutilated, her armies falling back before the invader; I evoke the home, the women praying, the children at school. Is it surprising that the image of the great French woman should suddenly appear, and find acceptance from all as a sublime witness to what faith can do, a superhuman example of courage and determination, patriotism and love?

The style is a little provocative, the words are in battle array; the ideas bristle, as if to pierce the German. But I don't care.

I put my copy into an envelope and hand it to the delighted Herr Professor without a smile. I confess that I am much exercised in my mind as to whether he will read my French prose to his Boche pupils.

A fortnight has passed: *I have not seen him again!* When I asked the doctor what had become of his friend he answered very gravely that he was much occupied at his school with the numerous examinations. I affected to

believe this. But I dare swear our Jeanne d'Arc has had something to say to it.

June 25.—After Przemysl, Lemberg. But no prisoners and no booty. The Russians are retreating in unbroken order. The doctor says, laughing :

" Stay a month longer and Warsaw will be taken. I shall have the pleasure of bringing you the news myself."

What does he mean by that : Stay a month longer ? Am I to be sent to a camp ?

June 26.—Sister Arnolda saw I was sad. She came to me : "Always, always writing ! " I smiled without answering. But I understood her kind impulse. The Russian retreat grieves me. The doctor and the orderlies are often tactless. She regrets this. The woman has intuitions, the Sister has pity. She thinks how she can show her sympathy. Presently she says :

" Would you like to come to church ? I will ask the sentry, after your walk."

I acquiesce quietly. The church is close by. I join her at the appointed hour. Sister Arnolda is quite alone. She refused the co-operation of a German soldier. We enter the church. It is a modern building, not more than ten years old. Sister Arnolda leaves me and goes to pray in a corner. I go round

the church slowly. My crutches are silent, and the sound of my solitary foot is muffled. What a jumble of architectures! Byzantine and modern, the former Germanized. A profusion of painting. Here and there, however, a picture, a valuable crucifix, attempts at works of art. The coloured glass is poor. The sanctuary seems empty, just because it is so overloaded. The only thing it has in common with our French churches is the solemn, august, reposeful silence. This silence calms me. It enters into my soul, left raw and bleeding by suffering, and I pray to the God of France.

In the middle of the choir stands a coffin, a symbol of death in battle, covered with a black drapery. There is a silver cross on it, and four candles are burning at the corners. I sit down for a moment, for I am tired. I look round. Worshippers come in, exclusively women. Their gestures look mechanical. There is none of that flexibility which distinguishes our women even in church. They walk like automata, bend the knee, incline the body, and depart with the same step. They glance at me sideways. This glance is dull, it has nothing of that flame rising from the fire within, which many women in our own country have allowed me to see in passing,

when, on lonely evenings in a strange town, I have gone to collect my thoughts before the God of Love.

Sister Arnolda rouses me from my reverie. "You have not seen the other aisle."

The church is cruciform. I follow my white-robed guide. I make as if I were pausing to examine the details of the gilding. The little Sister's face beams. Do I think it beautiful? As beautiful as our churches? I evade the question by saying:

"How peaceful it is in here!"

Poor little Sister Arnolda! I am very far from her, indeed. But her kindness attracts me, and the things that reveal the sincerity of her soul, the gentleness of her hands, her pure crystalline voice, the soothing grace of her beautiful childlike smile.

June 27.—The *Frankfurter Zeitung* has distinguished itself of late by an attack upon the French treatment of prisoners. For the German prisoners, incredible as it may seem in Europe, are badly fed, shamefully treated, sent to tropical countries, and guarded by negroes. This last is specially offensive to them These complaints fill the entire first page of the large newspaper. They are headed by this ferocious line in huge type: *Deeds of shame committed by the French.*

I read through the whole indictment which the Lehrer brought me. He watched my face narrowly throughout. When I handed him back the paper, I laughed, and shrugged my shoulders.

By way of reprisal, I showed the doctor some letters from my wife in the evening, dealing at some length with Prussian prisoners who had been put to work on the construction of a railway line in le Gers. They work, it is true, but they are splendidly fed: 800 grammes of bread, our good white French bread; 300 grammes of fresh meat, veal, beef, or mutton; 800 grammes of potatoes or other vegetables, and half a pint of wine per man per day, to say nothing of coffee, spices, salad, and the various extras allowed them.

The doctor made a grimace, then answered: "We can't give what we haven't got."

June 28.—I have already mentioned the newspapers the Germans provide expressly for prisoners. At Metz we had the amazing *Gazette de Lorraine*, and the venomous *Gazette des Ardennes*. Here we have a new journal, *The Weekly News* of Cologne. The articles are anonymous, and though perhaps less bitter in tone, less full of spite, rage, and hatred against the French, they are no less dangerous.

I have just been examining No. 15, the four

pages of which are full of delectable details concerning the exhaustion of our forces!

The second page is devoted to an historical essay, *The Treachery of Italy*. At the bottom of this, an "echo" informs us that the last statistics of provisions in Germany show a surplus of 8,968,929 hundredweights of flour. Is this why they allow us from 75 to 100 grammes of bread a day?

Potatoes yield the same satisfactory result. And the page concludes: "Normal consumption may therefore be resumed without fear of shortage."

A gayer note is struck in the picturesque article *Through Belgium* (by the [very] special correspondent of the *Journal de Genève*). He is said to have noted with admiration the Town Hall of Louvain, the only building left intact among the ruins. The editor adds by way of note: "This building withstood the flames thanks to German officers and soldiers, who, at the peril of their lives, and *under fire from the inhabitants*, exerted themselves to save the famous structure." German History is a wonderful thing! It will be telling us some day that the good citizens of Louvain roasted themselves.

Telegrams from General Headquarters occupy the last page. Pencil in hand, I marked

off the number of prisoners taken by the Germans from the 5th to the 9th of June, and this number is indeed unprecedented: 61,860 prisoners, to say nothing of cannon, machine-guns, etc. etc. How can one wonder, in the face of these absurdities, that the German people are still confident of final victory?

The Boche has no scruples as to methods of propaganda. I say nothing of the distributions of reviews. *Die Woche* is always of the number. But I must mention the little work entitled: *Prayers for the Use of French Soldiers.**

On page 6 of this work there is the following prayer:

Eternal God, Almighty Father, Thou hast brought us into captivity to make us search our hearts and seek Thy Face. Lord, we have denied Thee, and Thou hast rejected and chastised us. We acknowledge that we have deserved Thy just wrath, and we implore Thee to pardon us, to open the eyes of our poor French nation, and to bring it back to Thee, as of old Thou broughtest back the children of Israel in spite of their transgressions. Amen.

I read this over several times, and I was astounded at first, not that these brief lines have any exceptional importance as a war

* Herausgegeben vom Landesverein für innere Mission in Bayern. Nürnberg, Schweineauerstrasse 99. (Published by the National Union for Home Missions in Bavaria. Nuremberg, etc.)

document, but that the avowed dogmatism, the gravity of the tone, the convinced and would-be convincing attitude of the Prussian theologians are positively staggering.

In the eyes of religious Germany, the France of Renan deserves merciless chastisement. But, taking into account the sufferings of this country, whose errors, moreover, have only injured herself, what awful chastisement must be reserved for the Germany of Nietzsche, whose crimes are abominable indeed!

June 29.—An exchange of severely wounded prisoners is in progress. Over twenty of us are detailed for Constance, and are to leave very shortly. My joy is unbounded. I try in vain to moderate it, to think that something unforeseen may happen, to tell myself that joy after so much grief contains a germ of suffering. It overflows in spite of all. For I have read the order shown me by the doctor: it is an official agreement; all private soldiers who have lost an eye or a limb, all who are paralysed, blind, or tuberculous, etc., are hereby rendered eligible for exchange, without limitation of numbers.

The list has been drawn up. The Generalarzt (Surgeon-General) is, however, expected to-morrow, to decide certain doubtful cases.

Yes, such joy is not without pain. Too long

deferred, it disappoints, and unexpected, it is poignant; the rapture of it hurts.

July 1.—The list is approved. My name is still upon it. But a sentence of the Generalarzt troubles me.

"B. . . . and you," he said, "may have to wait for the result of our inquiry into the Metz affair."

Yes, I expected it. A new pretext. The doctor says it is not final. They expect an order this evening.

The same day, evening.—The order has come from Karlsruhe. We are to stay as hostages, I for having written the paper, B. . . . for having signed it. The others are to start to-morrow.

I have asked M. . . ., who lives in l'Aveyron, to write and tell my people as soon as he arrives. My grief is cruel, and it is intensified by fear; not the stupid fear of chastisement following on a fault, but fear of becoming the victim of some sinister manœuvre. The story of the parcels seems to me nothing but a pretext. True, B. . . . is to stay with me.

July 2.—The others went off this morning. I pondered deeply. I got up before six, and have just finished drawing up a petition to the Generalarzt.

I protest against the German measure which deprives two crippled French soldiers of the benefit of exchange. We have done no wrong. We made no complaint. The words that have been recorded cannot be used against us. They occurred in conversation, and were not accusations. The facts averred are capable of proof. The camps in the interior would furnish a hundred witnesses. Are the authorities anxious to convince us that the guilty will be punished when the inquiry is over? We do not care. Both B. . . . and I are perfectly indifferent as to the result of the inquiry. It would be a strange irony of fate if some fine day we were told: "You were right. The guilty will be punished," when as a fact we ourselves would have been cruelly punished by the prolongation of our exile. But all this is false. The matter is merely a pretext for detaining us. And I protest against this, appealing to the lofty sense of justice of the authorities.

The text is rather long, for I give a detailed account of facts and circumstances. After reading it to B. . . . I put it into an envelope, and take it to the office. But shall I get an answer?

I shall need a miracle now to enable me to get off. I count not upon myself, nor upon

others. I commit myself to God. My heart is sore.

July 3.—The miracle has happened. It was brought about by the accidental coincidence of a train with a number of severely wounded men on their way to Constance having stopped here, of nearly a hundred of them having been brought into our reserve hospital, and above all, of the presence among them of thirty-two patients from Metz, most of whom we knew. They furnished me with a proof, written and signed by Germans, of the accuracy of our statements. The culminating point of the affair seemed to be this : we had said that the soldier who distributed the parcels in November exacted sums of from 50 to 80 pfennige from the recipients. We were therefore suspected of having falsely accused a German soldier of theft. For at Offenburg no such sum had ever been paid for any parcel.

One of our comrades, B. . . ., a wounded prisoner, who had been at the Montigny hospital in November, handed me a receipt for 40 pfennige customs dues on a pound of chocolate. Forty pfennige on a pound makes 80 pfennige on a kilogramme, just as we had said.

As to the irregular practice of stopping

parcels and suppressing eatables, the wounded from Metz told us that this was still going on in the Hospital of San Klemens. After a few months of postal rectitude, the Germans at Metz had begun their pilfering again. To justify their lapses more or less, they had invoked the feverish state and weak digestions of the French wounded. Be this as it may, the fact remained that chocolate and other eatables were not given to the patients, which was what we had said.

I hasten, however, to warn our friends. Doctor H. . . . is very inquisitive. He will know that they come from Metz, he will question them about the parcels. . . . It is very important that they should be silent. It is quite enough that B. . . . and I should be detained for having said too much.

July 4.—A visit from the Stadtpfarrer (pastor). He had heard of my misfortune. He tells me to write a letter to the General-Kommando with the necessary detail. He will send it off, and support it to the best of his ability.

I do so gladly. Even if it does not enable me to go, it cannot do me any harm.

July 5.—I get an answer from the General-arzt. Polite and rather vague.

There is a good deal about "German

honour." The inquiry, moreover, is on foot. He no longer controls it, and could not stop it if he would. As to a "pretext," I cannot really believe it; it would be impossible for me to believe it. We shall only be detained as long as it is necessary.

Yes, I thought so.

July 6.—The doctor examined all the wounded from Metz this morning. He seems to have been impressed by their unhealthy appearance, by some severe wounds received last August and not yet healed, by gangrenous sores and twisted limbs, the more so that in my ward there is a severely wounded man, still unhealed, a victim of the wedge treatment.

"I should like to keep these men for three weeks," he tells me. "They would look very different when they returned to their own country."

The argument is admirable! *Not* for *your* sakes, poor wretches, but for Germany, with an eye to neutral opinion, for the gallery, "for honour"!

Perhaps I have convinced him! Perhaps he believes at last in honour!

The same day, evening.—Ward 12, first floor. B. . . ., R. . . ., and a few others are gathered together. I am in the middle of

them. Doctor H. . . . enters. He at once begins to ask questions. The wounded men are silent. I suppress a smile.

"Why do they not answer?"

"Well, *Monsieur le Docteur*, it's simple enough. I warned them. *They* don't want to be kept back."

"You did this?" His amazement is boundless.

"Yes, certainly."

"But it is folly. You are sacrificing yourself."

"I think not, doctor. They are holding their tongues in my interest. They *can* speak, but it will be in France. You wanted to hold an inquiry. Well, a French inquiry parallel with yours will prove the facts.

"You are an obstinate fellow! But I insist upon their speaking."

He questions them again; general silence.

"If I give them my word of honour that they shall leave just the same, that they may speak freely?"

I give B. . . . a look. He steps forward.

"Then we will speak."

Then the whole business is revealed. The doctor tries to hide his discomfiture. He leaves us presently, promising in a loud voice:

"Very well. This is better. I will settle this."

He has a long colloquy with the General-arzt outside the office. Then he comes back to me.

"Have you the receipt?"

I give him the paper. He is going to write to Karlsruhe.

"It's all over now. You will be able to leave. We are going to stop this affair. We know now why money was taken, and also why all the provisions were not given to the wounded."

I suppose I look sceptical, for he shakes his finger at me: "*Fuchs! Fuchs!*" (Fox.) He laughs heartily.

July 7.—Karlsruhe has answered. We may leave with our comrades.

My joy has free course now. But I shall not be quite easy till we are at Constance. The non-commissioned officer informs B. . . . and me that we are to go to the German barracks in the afternoon. Why? He cannot say.

This is an alarming riddle. What are they hatching now?

We consider two explanations: either the court-martial has been ordered to try our case, and has not received the counter-order from Karlsruhe; or they are perhaps going to draw

up an official statement that the inquiry is closed. I favour the second hypothesis. B. . . . is not very confident. I myself am serious. One never knows with " them."

What would prevent them, when we have gone through the doors, from locking us up in a cell, and keeping us under confinement until our comrades have left the town ? Of course it would be very late to try to prevent them from speaking. But are they not afraid that *we* should speak ? Was the order from Karlsruhe sanctioning our departure a new snare, a measure of clemency designed to lull us to sleep ?

Preparing for any contingency, B. . . . and I warn our friends. If we do not return, they will divine the meaning of the mystery, and their conduct in France will be very clearly indicated ; they must ask to have us claimed by the French Government. I hand my papers, notes, and diaries to the trusty little R. . . . And now we are ready.

Same day, evening.—We go along the shady streets to the barracks. A non-commissioned officer accompanies us. B. . . . and I look at each other furtively as we proceed. Which is the more confident of the two ? The barracks are close by. All the military buildings are enshrined in leafy verdure. The

large courtyards are full of trees. There is no hint of prison. Recruits who are drilling look at us as we pass.

On the right there is a narrow passage. A tall lieutenant plunges into it, staring at us as he passes. He says a few words to the non-commissioned officer, then a door opens. I am told to go in. B. . . . remains outside.

The room is an austere place. There is a walnut-wood writing-table in the middle, and a crucifix in one corner. The scent of flowers comes in at the open window.

"Your name?"

I give my name and calling. It is the lieutenant who is questioning me. He takes his place at the writing-table. A secretary is opposite him. By the lieutenant's side there is a young interpreter dressed in a pair of cloth trousers and a white blouse. I am to speak French, it will be easier. Before we begin upon the affair, a few amiable questions are put:

"You live in Paris?"

"Not altogether, monsieur."

"And what do you think of the war?"

"War, in general, is ruinous for every one. . . ."

"But who brought this one about, do you think?"

I cough discreetly. The three men look at me. I answer slowly :

" The papers say it was you. After the war, History will give more decisive facts, positive proof."

" The papers ? What papers ? "

" Well . . . the French papers."

" Which of these do you read ? "

I was about to pronounce a well-known name. I check myself, biting my imprudent tongue, and answer hypocritically :

" The *Echo des Pyrénées*."

He seems satisfied, and turns his cigar round and round.

" The *Echo des Pyrénées !* I never heard of it. Is it a military review ? "

I assent with a glance.

Then we begin to talk of the affair, and I am reassured. They sent for us to stifle the scandal. After a few questions, a report is drawn up. The silence is broken by occasional questions of an absurd kind.

" France is done for, don't you think ? "

" I hope not, *mon lieutenant*."

" You have fine theatres, many pretty women. . . . How do you like Germany now you have seen it ? "

" The Duchy of Baden is charming ; the Black Forest is most beautiful."

"And what about the organization of our hospitals?"

"Very good, lieutenant." (This is true enough).

"And what do you think of our soldiers?"

"I know very little about them. I had only been at the front six days, and I was wounded in my first fight."

"They are admirable, and most perfectly disciplined. Our officers are very highly educated, and most efficient. Now, I have just come from the front. I have seen French prisoners, several officers of my own rank. None of them could speak German, or at best, they could only speak a few words, and this very badly. Our officers can all speak French, many of them better than I. How do you think I speak?"

He runs on in this strain. I think of B. . . . in the passage. He must be on thorns.

At last the report is finished. They read it aloud to me! It is neither more nor less than a certificate of German honesty. I protest gently. I point out quite civilly that I was not charged by my government to undertake this gracious task of distributing praises. I ask for a very brief summary of the ascertained facts in their entirety, with the recommendation that the French soldiers implicated

should not be tried, as their statements were found to be correct. The lieutenant insists, threatens, and storms. I keep silence. Finally, he gives way, but he stipulates that the purpose to which the money was applied should be mentioned, and also the reason which justified the suppression of the eatables sent to feverish patients. I agree to this.

Then the writing begins again. Twenty lines are enough this time. There is, however, a little sentence full of adjectives, slipped in at the foot of the text, which implies that we had nothing to complain of. However, we sign. We are old enough to record our actual memories when the moment comes. I sign first, peering at this sentence, which was not read aloud to us. The lieutenant is watching me. B. . . . comes in. They read the paper to him. He signs and we go out. . . .

Oh! what a soft, blue atmosphere, what a fair summer evening above our heads!

July 10.—I have not written anything for three days. I have been too excited. I cannot sleep.

To go back, to see France again, to find her brave and faithful to her duty. After the long nightmare I am almost afraid of the waking. I cannot be calm. This faculty for suffering that we bear within us is really amazing. . . .

July 11.—We visit the cemetery. Doctor H. . . . arranged this, and we are touched by it. It is a pity that he should have circumscribed its magnanimity by the following sentence :

" You will see, and then you will be able to tell them in your country how Germany respects the mortal remains of soldiers who died doing their duty."

This is an allusion to complaints in the papers touching German soldiers buried by ours with an epitaph I will not repeat. It would be odious, if true ; but I cannot and will not believe it.

So we made a collection. All the French wounded gave their mite. After our meal, about 7 o'clock, the deputation started. It consisted of D. . . ., the artist, B. . . ., and myself. Two unarmed wounded German soldiers escorted us.

At the cemetery gates we found flowers ; eight enormous bouquets, then geraniums and a few roses in pots. The flower-seller came herself with tools to replant the flowers. And we went on to the graves.

How melancholy it was ! The German soldiers stood bareheaded and silent. B. . . . and D. . . . divided the flowers. My infirmity deprived me of the sad pleasure of

helping them, so I stood leaning against a tree. Some forty modest graves with flowers on them lay in two rows : the graves of soldiers without families who had come to Offenburg. A cross at the head marked the narrow space, and the outline of the grave was marked by lines of box. A few geraniums, and here and there a rose-bush decked the soft soil. And there are eight of our soldiers there. . . . At a first glance it was not easy to distinguish these from the rest. But a remark helped me to recognize them. The German crosses have a small Maltese cross painted above the name. The French graves are without this sign.

I read the names :

" Jean L. . . ., François B. . . ., Albert F. . . .," and five others.

B. . . . distributed the flowers as I looked. The roses were planted, the geraniums apportioned. Two little girls, from ten to twelve years old, watered each grave carefully, without distinction.

" The flowers are watered every evening," says one of the soldiers.

There is a gleam of gold from the plaited locks of the children. A few visitors are looking at us from the walks. The evening peace is profound. The woman in charge points to one of the graves :

"A captain lies there."

I look at the name. Jean L. . . . Nothing else. The soldier is not so sure. He knows that an officer was buried in this corner, but he does not seem to recognize the name on the cross.

"Well, it was some months ago. Perhaps Sister Arnolda could tell you."

B. . . . and D. . . . have finished. We linger still. It is hard to leave the spot. Some pollarded acacias make a dark patch. There are hardly any cypresses. The watered flowers smell sweet. And we think of our French cemeteries, of the families of those who are sleeping here. Yes, it must be terrible not to be able to come and tend the grave of the lost one, to know that he lies among strangers, that no fond hand closed his eyes, no loving lips gave him the farewell kiss. But we think, too, that those who sleep here did their duty, that they did not fail in their task, and a strain of lofty pride mingles with our pain.

We bow our heads in silence. We do not weep, we are no longer sad. Our hearts speak to them, and we bid them farewell in grave, fraternal salutation.

July 13.—My thoughts are far away. When Sister Arnolda rallies me on my absent look,

I can only smile. How impatient I am! After nine months of endurance, I am irritated by a delay of a day or two.

Oh! to see my people again, in l'Ardèche or le Gers, but in France, in my own country! To find the great nation with a new soul, a soul tempered by suffering! . . . I know that Constance is crowded with wounded. The arrival at Offenburg of 300 men to be exchanged was not an isolated instance. Nearly all the towns on the way are in the same case. The first departure for Lyons took place the day before yesterday. In a few days more we shall be able to start. My heart, my heart, have patience!

VI. EN ROUTE FOR FRANCE

July 14.—It is over. Offenburg lies far behind us. The first spurs of the grey mountains hide its roofs. Yesterday we were waiting for orders, and the doctor said: "Sunday." Then a telegram came. We were called at 6 o'clock, and at 7 we were all waiting in a group, in the great hall on the first floor. I had said my farewells upstairs; deeply moved, I had pressed the hands of my friends. I was on my way to joy, but I thought of those we were leaving behind, my dear little R. . . ., D. . . ., the Amiens painter, and many others, now recovered, who were to be sent to internment camps.

Sister Arnolda too held out her little hand to me, and I pressed it gently. It was a loyal hand, the hand of charity. Of all the Sisters we encountered in Germany, you alone were, to many Frenchmen, an incarnation of kindly sympathy with suffering, that Christian virtue which seems to be dying out on your soil. For this we thank and admire you, little Sister with the gentle smile, and may God be gracious to you.

Then it was the doctor's turn. He too held out his hand. All those who had been present for the past two months at our arguments and discussions will have understood the feeling that moved me to take the hand that had healed me. For a moment, I forgot the Boche. I saw only the admirable doctor who had operated on so many Frenchmen, who restored the use of his leg to poor N. . . ., the play of their muscles to others, to many more their health, and who had also been the benevolent and indefatigable protector of the French prisoners—laying himself open to attack, as I well knew. I will not play with words. His true character stands out, I think, in the foregoing pages. He is unquestionably a German, a Boche, if you will, but this Boche has a heart—not perhaps for France; yet he showed it to her sons. As a Frenchman, I am his enemy. As a man, I owe him a greeting.

The Frau Kommando was there. She put in her spiteful word:

"Are you letting *him* go?"

The motors arrived; vans were waiting for the stretchers. We were soon at the station. The Lehrer took away my crutches, and we waited a long while.

Now we are getting along. We left at 10 o'clock.

I am in the last carriage of the train, with a number of new faces. B. . . . is some way off. I don't know where the rest are. Oh! what a delicious morning! Tunnels, suspension bridges, precipices, wooded heights, the beds of torrents on every side. The Black Forest is a Switzerland or a Central Plateau. Here and there some dark houses, wider above than below. Wooden walls rise from the cement foundations. Thousands of window-panes glitter in the sunshine. These houses seem to be all windows.

We are going *viâ* Triberg. A halt. The lamps are put out. This is the culminating point: station of Sommerauer (932 metres), an air-cure resort, if I may judge by the villas and hotels that nestle among the pines. The line, which now begins to descend, has fewer tunnels. The land seems to be cultivated. Presently we run into Triberg. But we see nothing of the town. The station seems important. We wait twenty minutes. An express enters the station: Constance, *viâ* Triberg. The train is full of soldiers. A non-commissioned officer in the last carriage makes a sign to me. I recognize him vaguely. He is a schoolmaster who was in hospital at Offenburg, and is now going for a holiday to Switzerland. This train goes off: we follow

it. Now we come to the plain. The term is relative. Here and there we pass through deserted stations. The country is less beautiful, less undulating, but more fertile; not much corn, however; immense stretches of verdure.

5 *o'clock*, *Radolfzell*.—Lake Constance. The wind rose towards evening. It raises waves, and the water becomes dark. There are pleasure-boats under the lee of the mole. But I am not much concerned with the view. I am looking within myself.

Singen.—An immense factory to the right of the railway, a branch of the Maggi firm. An iron bridge passing over the line gives the workmen access to the neighbouring streets. And it is the hour when they all come out. The bridge, soon crowded with people, forms an observatory for the crowd. "French prisoners on the way to Constance!" There are neither threats, cries, nor angry gestures. They look in silence. To the left, under the long glass roof, there are flags on all the pillars, pennons with the Baden colours, evergreens and flowers, ready to welcome the German wounded returning from France.

A final start. This time the train goes slowly. It follows the contour of the lake, now close to the edge, now farther inland.

At last we are at Constance. We pass through the suburbs. From wooden sheds standing in rows under the trees behind low walls there are cries of greeting. They come from Frenchmen like ourselves, whose red *képis* glow in the evening light; they are wounded soldiers waiting to start. A picturesque medley: Zouaves, Chasseurs, artillerymen, infantrymen, clad in nondescript garments of every sort. We return their salutation.

Our train runs into the station. The Swiss train on the opposite line is already full. It starts at 7.40. It is only just 7. We question its lucky occupants.

"How many days were you at Constance?"

"Shall we have to stay long?"

"Shall we be examined?"

"Are they very severe?"

Questions and answers cross each other. I catch the second as they fly. No, not very severe for private soldiers. The Commission is indulgent. They are not quite so easy with the non-commissioned officers.

Now we are on the platform. Those who can walk go off in little groups, escorted by soldiers. I sit and wait on a bench. I cannot hop along on one foot.

July 15.—Lodged at the barracks in a

wooden shed. Nearly 200 of us. Directly we arrived last night we had to fill in our papers. Identity, etc. . . . For the Commissioners, it seems. We are to go before them to-day at 10 o'clock. I am over-excited, and slept very badly. Besides, our mattresses are so alive with vermin they could walk to the lake by themselves.

Same day, about noon.—The formalities are over. We went through in order according to the numbers on our beds. I was No. 111. How many pale faces and features contracted by suffering there were in that procession!

The Commission is composed of two German doctors of high rank and two Swiss doctors; the latter spoke little, acquiescing in what was said by the others. They were liberal enough in their selection. Out of our two hundred, only five or six were refused.

The longest and most elaborate examination was bestowed, as was just, on the consumptive and paralytic patients. Those who had lost a limb were very soon passed through. "A1" or "A2," the doctor called out, according to the missing member; we replied "Present." The examination was brief. Several non-commissioned officers who had lost a leg, and who were very nervous, having only this one wound, were nevertheless passed. One

of the German doctors soon pointed this out:

"You can tell them in France that we are very liberal. We trust France will be equally so to our wounded."

The reason for this conduct is rather to be found, in my opinion, in the arrival by train to-day of twenty-eight German non-commissioned officers, not very severely wounded. This German generosity is the direct result of a chivalrous French action.

July 16.—Our excitement is at fever pitch. A train is to start for Lyons to-night. Shall we be among the lucky ones?

The Constance newspapers say there are 1500 wounded in the town. The sheds are emptied in rotation. Ours, the largest, contains enough severely wounded men to fill a train. The orderlies say it will be evacuated on Saturday or Sunday, and then we shall start.

The time passes very slowly. We are not able to go out. We may just pace up and down in front of the door; but a sentry with his rifle on his shoulder hampers our movements. As soon as an officer appears the man stands suddenly to attention. This amuses us a little. Our only distraction is to watch the Landsturm drilling and doing the goose-step twice a day. The sight is interesting. A

sergeant-major—whose two legs must certainly represent a weight of 200 pounds—gives the word of command. His voice is unique, like the bark of a pug-dog in tone and compass: short, sharp, trenchant, and shrill on certain syllables. The antics of this portly non-commissioned officer, with his very short tunic compressing his waist, and his enormous posterior are our greatest diversion.

We smoke, be it said. Tobacco is cheap here, and our orderlies are willing to trade.

Yesterday I was surprised and delighted to see two non-commissioned officers arrive in my shed: M. . . . and R. . . . They were sent to Constance quite a fortnight ago, and I thought they were at Lyons. But it seems that the Commission rejected them. The usual reason: only one limb missing; stripes on the sleeves. Two days later, they were sent to an internment camp a long way off. The day before yesterday, they returned to Constance, recalled by a telegram from the Kommandantur. The reason given yesterday was the presence in the train-load of German wounded of non-commissioned officers lacking one limb like M. . . . and R. . . ., who had been repatriated by the French. My two friends were enchanted. But what emotions

they must have experienced in one week! I shudder at the thought of it.

July 17.—The food is not good; it is sufficient, perhaps, but very inferior to that of Offenburg. It does not much matter, it is true. Oh! soon we shall be tasting our own good bread, and the light wine that gives one wings! There is no sugar in the coffee; but I suspect the orderlies of filching this, for they make up half-pound packets which they sell to us.

All the articles in use are dirty. I have already spoken of the bedding: it is alive with lice, and with other loathsome little insects. Every day we are busy killing them. "They are brought from yonder," says a corporal to me. He means from the camps. Our spoons, our forks, our rounded knives, the glass we drink from, are all begrimed. And what shall I say of the sheets—for we have sheets, though none of us ever use them.

July 18.—To-morrow is the day. Some Swiss deaconesses have come to bring us flowers. They brought us the pleasant news.

Many of us are anxious. So far, no one has been informed of the verdict of the Commission. But we know that several of us are to remain at Constance. They are to be rejected as not very seriously wounded. We

are racked by fears. We talk together to pass the time.

I have made the acquaintance of several severely wounded men who have come from Parchim. They give me details. Life there is intolerable. The food is unspeakable; scarcely ever any meat; the substitute is cod, tainted dried cod, the spongy flesh of which has a repulsive stench. Every kind of ill-treatment; but this is most lavishly bestowed on the Russians. A diminutive Prussian lieutenant sets the example. His favourite amusement is to slap the faces of the soldiers, more especially the non-commissioned officers. The jailers use a cudgel or an ox-sinew lash. Bread is hardly issued at all; ever since the end of June the allowance has been three pounds for twelve men, that is, 125 grammes a day. Of course this is *Kriegsbrot*, adulterated and fermented, chiefly bran and potatoes. The postal service is fairly good, save when the commandant takes it into his head to stop all correspondence for a month. Parcels are delivered, which enables the men to feed themselves, without drawing much upon the bran-soup and the rotten potatoes.

At the camp of Merseburg, other comrades tell me, life is much the same. But ill-treatment is less frequent. The punishment of

" the post " is the only one inflicted. I will describe this torture.

The victim is tied to a wooden post set up in the middle of the court. His head-gear is taken away from him, and he is left in the sun or the cold, according to the season, for a certain number of hours, in proportion to the gravity of the fault to be punished.

Another punishment very frequently inflicted is to deprive the whole camp of its letters. This method has a double advantage. It lightens the labours of the censors, who are not very well versed in the subtleties of our language.

Sound prisoners are made to work. Some, go as agricultural labourers to great landowners, in place of the labour the army has absorbed ; others work in factories and make explosives. Many are sent to the mines. This last, M. . . . tells me, is the hardest of all the tasks. Young and old are detailed for it without distinction ; professors and teachers are even specially selected, and the results are heartrending. Catastrophes due to inexperience are of almost daily occurrence, and claim as many victims as the bursting of a shell. Many prisoners who were not wounded on the battlefield will come back from Germany *minus* a limb.

We talk of the state of mind of prisoners in the camps. M. . . . tells me it is satisfactory. He praises the industry of the prisoners. The camp is a little bazaar. All sorts of things are bought and sold there. In one corner a tea-seller dispenses his hot drink in the sheds at stated hours. In another, a manufacturer of milk-chocolate has made some moulds for himself, and his enterprise is prospering. Some are tobacco-vendors. Others sell salads. Among the latter is a huge negro, a Senegalese, formerly, they tell me, trumpeter to the Marchand Mission. This hero, a giant in stature, is the terror of the German guard. The sentries are afraid of him and leave him in peace. Attempts to force him to work were all futile. He declined the proposal with scorn.

His present occupation is to lay out tiny gardens in the confines of the sheds, and to cultivate salads in them.

The Russian element predominates in the camps. There are a few Englishmen, but very few. All these prisoners trade with one another. The Russians sell their splendid boots to the French for a mark, or a mark and a half; the English sell their overcoats.

There is not a soldier but has his souvenir. Jewels and trinkets abound. The Russians,

in default of metal, quietly requisitioned the long leaden pipes which bring water to the wash-houses. Or again, they annexed the benches, carving miniature aeroplanes from them, to the despair of the German custodians of the furniture. They have even begun to attack the beams which support the roof.

All these details make us laugh.

They tell us, too, of the cunning with which the Prussian authorities send trainloads of prisoners backwards and forwards from one camp to another. The civilians assemble and acclaim the Kaiser, for they believe that these few hundreds of prisoners are the outcome of victories announced by the Wolff Agency. And their joy is very natural.

The artistic element is well represented in most of the camps. Merseburg boasts an orchestra. Religious services are accompanied by music, and, incredible as it may seem, all the instruments our brave comrades use are the work of their own hands. Cigar-boxes and the cases which contained margarine or preserves provided wood for violins and violoncellos. All they bought were the strings and the bow, purchased with the connivance of the jailers. What is still more surprising is that the sounds of these instruments are very harmonious.

Unhappily this picture, almost a cheerful one, has its mournful side. Consumption ravages most of the concentration camps. My interlocutors themselves are full of deep anxiety as to the future of the French prisoners. The human capital which the military authorities detain in the camps is a valuable asset. After our victory, when a treaty shall oblige German doors to open before them, our unwounded soldiers will represent an important national possession. But in what state shall we find them? Anæmia is doing its deadly work among the less robust. Will the others be able to endure? Insufficient food predisposes these men to disease. The much vaunted German hygiene exists in the hospitals but not in the Prussian *Lagers* (camps). The neutrals must either be the dupes or the accomplices of the German authorities. Indeed it is unquestionable that a good deal of distressing complicity on the part of the worthy neutrals will come to light in due season in connexion with their visits to the camps. The unusual manner in which they are conducted is a sufficient proof of this. To be effectual, inspection should be unexpected. The camps, contrary to all reason, are warned of the visit, often several days beforehand. Thus there is time to conceal anything that

might strike the distinguished visitor unpleasantly. Additions are made to the dietary; it becomes normal. If the weather is cold, the coal-buckets, which always stand empty, are filled up that morning. . . . How then can the report be anything but temperate, and even laudatory? . . . This is the more regrettable, in that the neutrals will find it difficult to prove their good faith when the truth comes to light.

Meanwhile innumerable soldiers are suffering daily from hunger, languishing and fading. Many will contract incurable tuberculosis, and if they come home, will come home only to die, perhaps after infecting those they love best. . . . Moreover, there is one phrase on all lips: it is a plain expression of the thoughts of all around me: Germany is making a deliberate attempt to impair or destroy the health of her prisoners. She is attacking the race. Facts, identical in most of the camps, aggravate our fears and transform them into realities. When, after the war, we know how many of our soldiers have died in the camps, an inquiry will be inevitable. Properly conducted, it will give the low water-mark of Prussian mentality, the deliberate cruelty, the cold desire to injure that characterizes German militarism, and its evidences will be

such that the German nation will appear a monster in the literal sense of the word, having recourse to the most indefensible acts to vanquish us even in the future.

So each of us contributes his experiences. It would take a volume to hold them all. Others will record them better than I, and, indeed, my notes already cause me some anxiety. How shall I get them through without discovery.

July 19.—The sergeant-major has come. An agitating moment. He reads out the names one by one in their order on the list: "110, So-and-so . . . "

Why does he pause thus at my name? . . .

"111, Charles Hennebois. Well, are you deaf?" I felt choked. I answered "Present." Then I moved away, all my blood rushing to my head. I took a turn in the courtyard, breathing in the pure air. Then I came back. A joyous commotion filled the great room.

We are going, going to-day, in a few hours. Quickly, let us pack. The examination of our belongings has already begun. By 11 o'clock it is over.

VII. THE WONDERFUL RETURN

Evening, 7 o'clock.—I did not wait for the ambulance. With five or six others I boarded the cart a horse was taking along to the station with a great jingling of bells. The vehicle is very much like those used by market-gardeners at home. We sat on the edges on either side, our one leg dangling. We soon make our way through the busy streets, in the sunset glow.

A doctor with grizzled hair and a pale complexion awaits us on the platform.

"Here, all the men who have lost a limb. Right up in front."

I lead the group. To our dismay, all the carriages are fitted with berths. Sleep on such an evening as this! All my comrades agree. I go back to the doctor."

"We should like to sit up."

"Sit up? How can you suggest such a thing. You won't get to Lyons till to-morrow at 9 o'clock. You would be exhausted."

A deaconess belonging to the train is of the same opinion as the doctor. But I insist.

"We came from Offenburg, and before that

from Metz on wooden seats without any cushions. Those journeys were fairly long. Why mayn't we sit up like the others when we are going to see our own country again ? "

A brief argument. Then the doctor gives in. As if we could sleep to-night ! Fancy making us travel in a close carriage without lights. They might as well leave us at Constance !

I lead off my band. A wounded soldier beckons to us : " Here ! In the last carriage." I recognize M. . . . from afar. Now we are installed. It is a fine carriage, almost new, with first- and second-class compartments. That in the middle is reserved for the staff.

We wait an interminable time. French soldiers and hospital orderlies, and a group of bandsmen defile before us on the platform. They are prisoners of the month of August, going home like ourselves. A train of " Sanitarians," as the Germans call them, will follow ours in twenty minutes. R. . . . de la F. . . . comes up. He had been placed quite at the end, beyond the platform. He wants to be with us. One of the wounded men gives up his place to him, and goes off to take his. We are quite full.

" No examination here," says a deaconess to one of the wounded. I should not have asked ; but I am delighted to hear it. A

German orderly comes and takes away my crutches. I grumble a little at first. But never mind, I shall get some at home. . . . At home!

A shunting manœuvre begins which makes me tremble. Our portion of the train is taken off and coupled to the last carriages. It is 7.30. We are at the second platform. Two Prussian lieutenants with single eyeglasses walk slowly up and down. A few French heads look out and disappear again. I keep close to the door. I want to see Swiss ground, to be one of the first to greet it.

A subdued *Marseillaise* is already beginning to be heard in our carriage. The lieutenants prick up their ears. We silence the imprudent singers. A kindly Swiss captain says smilingly: "Have patience, my friends. You will be over the frontier in two minutes."

How long those two minutes seem! A sharp, short whistle. The train gets under way heavily. What a length it is. We soon pass out of the station. There are high banks to the left and right, a hedge of curious spectators, and, all at once, noise and applause. Great Heaven! We are in Switzerland!

A tremendous, deafening shout drowns the noise of the train: "*Vive, vive la France!*"

It is marvellous, delirious. A crowd of people, light dresses on each side of the line; not so many older men, but young ones by the thousand. "Hurrah for the wounded! Hurrah for the mutilated!" Kind hands throw their bouquets at us. Parcels are held out at the ends of long sticks, bottles of wine, boxes of cigars, and flowers again, avalanches of flowers. How this welcome warms our hearts! We lean out, feeling we have not enough hands to catch the tricoloured blossoms, not enough eyes to see the sympathetic crowd. The train thunders along, bears us towards happiness. Oh! such minutes are well worth months of suffering! Long live Switzerland, who offers us this fraternal greeting, and all the sweetness of her flowers!

Winterthur.—An immense crowd. The train does not stop, but it slows down. And we receive a ringing ovation!

France, didst thou know thou wast so dearly loved? Be proud, be happy. These cries, these acclamations, this tumult are all for thee! Listen to these exclamations: "To France and the Right! To calm and noble France! To her who is fighting for us!" And all the notes that we hold in our hands, and all the flowers piled upon us are for thee, other!

The train rolls on. Night is falling. Darkness is about to lend its mystery to our journey across the plain.

M. . . ., R. . . . de la F. . . ., and I examine the various missives. Dear artless letters, strong, noble messages, sincere and tender expressions of affection and faith. They are fastened to little tricolour bags, to pipes which will be a more lasting souvenir, or slipped in among cigars, tobacco, cigarettes, and matchboxes.

Shouts bring us to the door every minute. We pass through small stations, packed with curious spectators. And everywhere there are the same cries, the same greetings to France. I am too hoarse to shout any more. All along the railway banks, on the bridges, in the fields, every few hundred yards groups of men and women offer us flowers: wreaths of fresh blossoms, or crowns of dark laurel that were meant for victors.

We continue our work of sorting the letters as soon as there is silence again. Marvellous words! These are unique. They were tied round the neck of a bottle of old Rhine wine:

Dear and great French soldiers,—These lines are to tell you of the heartfelt admiration of some young Swiss citizens of twenty. You fell for the

peace of the world; mutilated and wounded, you suffered in exile for the victory of Right.

You are going home now. Well, tell your people that sincere friends are full of admiration and of joy, in spite of their tears, thinking of the French army and the great nation.

Oh! would that we could help you, in spite of our weakness. But we have only our good wishes, our admiration, and our love, and these we give you.

Signatures followed.

Then there was this other, eloquent in its simplicity:

I wanted to offer my services to France as a military airman. I have applied to the Consul-General. I bring my own aeroplane. French heroes, what must I do to enable me to come and help you?

And innumerable others. I should like to quote them all.

We are at Zurich. But the vast station is empty. No one is allowed on the platforms. It is too near to Germany. The authorities fear altercations. And I was told just now in the train of the rough handling of a German merchant who objected to the enthusiasm shown by the crowd for the French wounded.

However, in the open space to the left of the station, on the bridges, in the windows of all the neighbouring buildings, the crowd, though it is kept at a distance, is not silent. Prolonged ovations greet the train, and all the wounded acknowledge them. In the groups on the platform there are certain sinister persons, who, under cover of a Swiss name, try to secure us as correspondents, for what purpose it will be readily understood. However, they fail to beguile any of us.

The train goes on again. . . . It gets dark and colder, but we still keep at the windows. On the neighbouring hills, some few hundred yards from the train, lights flash out as we pass. They are transparencies on which we read a greeting: "Hurrah for victorious France! Honour to the French wounded!"

Food is distributed; little golden brown rolls, smelling of good wheat, chocolate, fruit, cold meat and potted meats. After our privations and our longing for French bread, our joy is childlike. We hold the crisp bread with a reverent hand; with the other we hang on to the door to keep our balance. The train is going fast, and we have been standing since we left Constance. Sit down? . . . But where? . . . Our compartments are full to overflowing. Masses of flowers, in sheaves,

in bouquets, in every form, and scattered pell-mell; magnificent scented carnations, roses, crimson or pallid. The whole flora of the country, that of gardens, mountains, meadows, and banks. In the racks and on the seats little half-open parcels, tied with tricoloured ribbons. When we started we were given a brown holland bag to put all these things in. And what a clamour everywhere! Do people never go to bed in Switzerland? It is nearly midnight. Fireworks galore and luminous inscriptions!

Berne.—A very short wait. More presents. A dense crowd. Cheers and acclamations. Suddenly one of us, leaning out of the window towards the crowd, cries in ringing tones:

"Long live Liberty!"

A prolonged clamour, the frenzied manifestation of intimate aspirations, answers him at once. It is an intensely moving moment. The cry is taken up by thousands of mouths outside the station. It rolls under the station vault with a sound as of thunder, and is repeated by distant echoes. . . . The train moves off slowly.

Fribourg. Lausanne at last.—What words can I use to describe the growing enthusiasm? Massed upon the inner platforms, a human tide surges up to the two sides of the train.

In one corner to the left, strong male voices have started our national hymn, and the *Marseillaise* is taken up by fervent voices. The whole train-load is singing to a man.

Soon, the enthusiasm becomes delirium. When we reach the passage: "*Liberté, liberté chérie, combats avec tes défenseurs,*" the crowd roars and stamps. Our carriages are invaded, the buttons are torn from our coats, my overcoat is in rags. I try in vain to keep its last remaining button.

"A souvenir of a severely wounded soldier! A relic of the war! For a Frenchwoman, monsieur!"

Children are held up to kiss us, and clasp their little arms round our necks. Eager hands are held out to press ours.

We are overwhelmed. Flowers, cigarettes, chocolate in heaps. A Swiss takes my *képi* and gives me his in exchange. Women who cannot get near the train beg us to throw them a flower. We pelt them with roses. M. . . . kisses his hand to them. Our eyes are full of tears. When the train moves, groups hang on to it, like bunches of human fruit, eager to see and touch us.

We shall soon be at Geneva. And a faint grey dawn just begins to touch the horizon. Higher up, the sky is still full of darkness.

Trembling stars spangle its sombre blue. The train increases its speed. And very low down in the distance, where the mist seems to part now and then, there is a soft whiteness, which must be Leman, Lake Leman! And on the other side, those lights that disappear and then gleam again, must be the Land of France, the French bank of the lake!

We fall into a reverie, and the train forges ahead. A tinkle already announces our arrival. We rush along the line and enter the station, greeted by acclamations as at Lausanne.

How shall I find new words to describe a welcome that was the same everywhere? From Constance to Geneva, the various stages of our triumphal march were marked throughout by joy. At Lausanne and Geneva, the welcome, emotional as elsewhere, was already more intimate, more French in tone and manner; it was the crown of joy, the fairest bouquet offered by love. I find it difficult to say what I mean. There was a shade of difference, perhaps not perceptible to the crowd itself, but to us who know, and who are familiar with these towns in which so many French hearts beat in unison. And then again, it was the last stage for us, after which our eyes would rest on our own soil.

The train is off again, and runs on to the incline which starts from Cornavin. At every window overlooking the embankment there are sympathizers who have left their beds before dawn to greet us and smile to us. The houses are hung with flags—Bengal fires everywhere.

And now we are in the country. We gather in the corridor on the left. In another instant we shall be in France. After the exaltation, the various emotions of our wonderful journey, a silence has fallen upon us. M. . . . drums with his fingers on the window-pane. R. . . . de la F. . . ., standing very straight, supporting himself against the door, lets his eyes wander over the flying landscape. He must be seeing something in the deepest depths of his own being.

The deaconess with us respects our silence. And suddenly, close beside us, a grave voice, that of the hospital orderly, pronounces these words :

" Gentlemen, we have crossed the frontier. You are in France."

Then, strange to say—for we had thought to cry aloud, greeting France, intoxicated by the first contact with her soil—we are all silent, and tears, tears that spring from a very remote source, the best, the purest and the

highest of our being, roll down our emaciated cheeks, as we clasp each other's hands very tenderly.

On the platform of a station—Pougay or the next, I could not read the name—a gendarme and a few sympathetic civilians watch the train go by. Day has come, soft and pale. When the mists lift, the deep bed of the Rhône appears from moment to moment. I think of all my loved ones. My soul is open to joy; my whole heart yearns for it. Nevertheless, I am a little sad. Is it a vain regret, the painful sense of the irreparable, the melancholy inherent in these tardy returns, when health is broken, the body mutilated, the heart weary? No, it is not that. The springs of life have not lost their freshness for me. Enjoyment still lives. I suffer in my pity for others. I think of the wounds of France.

Now *Bellegarde*.—I dare not lean out to look on the platform. The train comes in slowly. Hardly has it stopped when music breaks out, vibrates, swells, and brings us to our feet. Our legs tremble under us. Oh! the intense emotion of that *Marseillaise* on this bright July morning! We want to speak, to shout, but our throats contract, and we stand trembling and shaken by sobs in our invaded corridor. But all along the train

the voices of the wounded beat out the immortal rhythm. A tempest of passion vibrates in the words and reverberates in the glorious strophes.

At last we can see. Our eyes, washed by tears, take in the sun with delight. Our little soldiers are present. There is a company under arms to do us honour. They greet us with gallant laughter. They look very well in the new uniform : the grey putties and green velvet breeches. Even the customs officers look new to me. My former journeys seem so remote at this moment.

Our men are already gulping champagne. A bevy of young girls are decking us with flowers. We ask them simply, but not without emotion, to give us the first kiss from French lips, after so many months of exile. They acquiesce prettily. . . . An old colonel questions me.

" So they have taken off your paw ? "

" Yes, *mon Colonel.*"

He clasps my hand. His lip trembles a little under his white moustache. M. . . ., who had got out, comes back laden with flowers. Alas ! I have not been able to touch our beloved soil with my quivering foot.

Ambérieu.—The same crowd. French aero-

planes have come to meet the train. They hover about two hundred yards above us, dropping flowers and bouquets.

I am alone, almost sad, in the empty carriage. Those who can walk have gone to the flag-bedecked waiting-room, where wine is offered them.

I think with much emotion: to-morrow at this hour I shall be at Toulouse. When we left Bellegarde, French hospital orderlies came along the train. We filled in a paper and noted the town of France to which we want to go. A card pinned on to my old overcoat bears my number in the train, 143, and my destination. I have read it over a hundred times. It is a childish pleasure, but so sweet that it moves me to tears. To-morrow, actually to-morrow! And I have no money. A postal order I expected did not come in time. How can I let my people know of my arrival? A cordial greeting rouses me from my dreams.

"Can't you get out?"

"No, *mon Colonel*, I have no crutches."

"Wait a minute, you must have a drink here."

He goes to the door, gives an order, and comes back, accompanied by a handsome *sous-préfet*. We talk for a few minutes. Then, suddenly:

"Is your family expecting you? Have you telegraphed to them?"

I am taken by surprise, I answer frankly: "I can't, *mon Colonel*. I haven't a *sou* left."

"Where do you live?"

"Near Toulouse."

"Near Toulouse, you rascal! And you never told me! Why, we are compatriots!"

He hands me a card.

"Write your telegram. I will send it off from Ambérieu."

I scribble hurriedly.

"Thank you, *mon Colonel*."

"Your good health, my dear fellow, and *au revoir* down there."

He points with his broad hand to the South-West. Then he continues his visit. All my comrades come back. One of them kindly brings me a fine poem by Aguétant: *Souvenir d'Ambérieu, Aux Mutilés français*, printed on a double page with the national colours.

The train starts again. The sun has risen. It has been shining since we left Ambérieu, putting dots of gold in the dust on the road, where our eyes are rejoiced by the sight of troops drilling. They stop to look at us. On the edge of the line to our left there are colonial troops in great numbers, gallant infantrymen waving their *képis*. We throw

them cigars and flowers. Sometimes an officer on horseback, rising in his stirrups, salutes with a sweeping gesture.

"Long live the Army!" replies our train.

But we are beginning to feel the strain. M. . . ., leaning against the door, looks half dead. A few of the wounded are dozing.

Lyons.—Our train comes slowly into the gaily decorated station. The *Marseillaise* resounds, and is taken up by our men; the Swiss national hymn follows. The public is kept back by excellent arrangements for maintaining order. There are a great many uniforms on the platform, a General in full dress, then the representative of the Minister. The Red Cross is represented by a large band of ladies, solicitous and sympathetic, who help us to get out.

I have buckled my haversack. A wounded Belgian, who has been provided with an artificial leg, lends me his crutches, and I follow the crowd, gently supported by our kindly Red Cross nurses. M. . . . is beside me, R. . . . de la F. . . . in front. We like to keep together. They will go to Paris this evening. Until then our group is to remain intact.

The lift takes us down to the ground floor of the station. Is it Brotteaux? I think so. We walk slowly into a great hall, hustled a

little by the crowd. The walls have disappeared under a perfect avalanche of flowers. Lyons offers us champagne. The representative of the Minister of War is going to receive us in his name. Only those in the first rows can hear what he says; but fragments of his speech reach us. ". . . duty accomplished . . . the glorious task; the gratitude of France . . . her maternal love which will heal our cruel wounds. . . ." Our voices unite in a clamour of tenderness: *Vive! vive la France!* Then we all stand and sing the national hymn, and it is over. *En route* again now. But these emotions overwhelm us. And the heat is trying. We need rest.

Under the trees of the Pré-aux-Clercs.

Calm is restored. It must be 4 o'clock. After a comfortable meal in the great flower-decked hall, we had a concert. Now we are all resting, save a very merry Zouave, whose right foot has been amputated; he is performing acrobatic feats which raise a laugh. R. . . . de la F. . . . is talking to some ladies a little way off.

We tried just now to lie down and sleep, for some beds had been prepared for this purpose in the hall. But as we found it impossible, we preferred the pure air out of doors, cooled by a little breeze.

My throat is very painful. I cannot talk. M. . . . has given me his address :

" Write to me soon."

I give him mine. When shall we meet again ?

Very close ties have been formed by the accident of fortuitous meetings. Isolation and exile favoured the union of hearts. Now parting is at hand. Each of us goes off in a different direction, perhaps to link up a precarious future to his past. How many cripples there are among us !

But they are hurrying us now.

" Those for Paris. . . . Those for Toulouse. . . . The wounded for Bordeaux."

A motor takes us back to the station close at hand, and once more we are saluted by the troops. A second-class carriage, each compartment allotted to four wounded men, has been reserved for those going to Toulouse.

" Take your seats."

And as night falls, a train goes off slowly to Perrache, handkerchiefs waving to the last carriages. They are going north to Paris : we are going to the South.

At what time do we start ? A civilian tells me :

" A little before midnight, by the Marseilles train."

I tell my comrades and set down this final note.

Oh! to sleep now! To sleep, and live these wonderful hours anew in dreams. To gather up with both hands, as a child gathers up a toy, those pure, sacred and unforgettable emotions, and hide them away in one's heart.

August 5, *Mauvezin, Gers.*—An afternoon in the garden. The sky is a transparent blue. Flowers all around us. My wife sews in silence, her work upon her lap. Sometimes she looks up and her eyes rest tenderly on mine. I write or dream. The calm is profound, the hour is sweet. But for the sound of wheels, a cry in the street, or a few sonorous words in our musical *patois*, the town would seem asleep, lulled by the warmth and the pure air.

How far we seem from the war! It is now a week since my arrival. I longed so to be free, to move spaciously in a broader road, to be among my own people. The meeting was painful. Not that any regrets saddened this sweet hour; but that so many tears had been shed in my absence, so many ills had been bravely borne, calling for the final tears, those that exhaust the cup.

The melancholy of long-expected returns is intense. I left you young and strong; joy

shone from my eyes; it did not seem possible that evil should befall the firm, supple, vigorous body you held in your arms. I come back mutilated, walking uncertainly, unused to joy. No, there is no regret, assuredly; but why do I stop suddenly before the familiar house, at the garden which a stone step separates from the old walls. Why do the two hands that grasp the crutches tremble so? Why do I go so slowly up the polished stairs? . . . The physical being remembers; it suffers and bleeds. What! No more easy movements, no more long walks through woods and meadows. Then the spiritual being, matured by suffering, prevails, and silences the heart.

The struggle was very brief in me. The spiritual being gained the victory. My serene thoughts are busy on this balmy evening, and they are untouched by regrets. I taste the salt of life. If my physical strength has been inexorably diminished, my vision is enlarged, it embraces new things. My faith has not succumbed in the tragic encounter with the realities of conflict. I have purified it, cleansed it of doubt, and I no longer believe in death.

FINIS

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