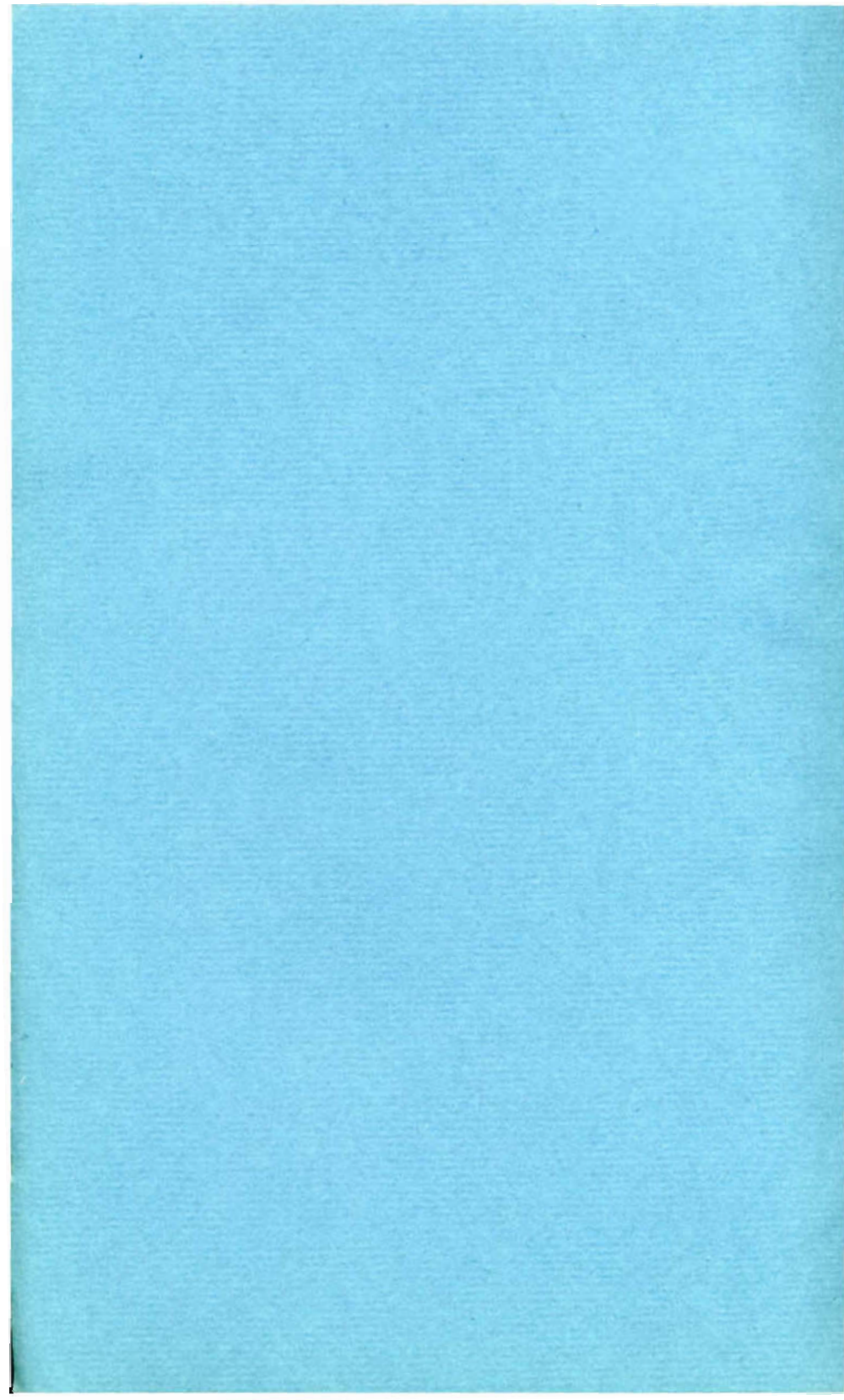


MEMORIES

By
Dorothy Cheney



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November, 1917 — March, 1919

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BOAT

IN the spring of 1917 Peg went to Paris to work for the Committee of the Children of the Frontier, and at the end of October I sailed on the Rochambeau to join her. Indian summer days and calm seas made danger seem remote and yet the underlying sense of it startled the strangely mixed company of serious Red Cross and Y. M. C. A. workers, fashionables and adventurers into a surprised friendliness. A stout and pompous American General organized a Vigilance Committee whose duty, as nearly as I could discover, was, in case of disaster, to secure the life boats to first class passengers. The General walked the deck with a holster strapped about his imposing middle, carrying a very large pistol. It was rumored that the French officers found us the most trying and nervous boat load they had yet transported.

Having been definitely assured the day before sailing that I would be in a cabin with one other woman, it was something of a surprise to find four names written on the door. The others proved to be a Boston school teacher, a missionary nurse and the flapper bride of an aviator, who, with the usual success of wealth and position, was joining her husband contrary to the strictest rules.

At night the Y. M. C. A. seemed to be considerably less earnest than by daylight. On the unlighted decks forgotten radiolite wrist watch faces, large

ones and small ones, winked together and silhouettes against the sky melted from two into one.

The last two nights it was intolerably hot with four in a cabin meant for two and with the porthole closed for fear of light, so Miss Weeks and I slept on deck. The second night I came to with a start to find a queer little weazened Greek man whom I had noticed in a chair nearby bending over me saying in a husky voice, "Lady, Lady, wake up! The boat has stopped!" Just then a disheveled woman came down the deck struggling to get into a life belt and moaning. For a moment it was frightening and then the engines started again and we went quietly on.

The night before landing there was custom's inspection on deck. It was pandemonium. There were no porters and those who could not, or would not, wave ten dollar bills at the stewards had to pull and tug their own trunks the length of the deck. Then the next morning the boat stuck on a sand bar at the entrance of the Gironde. By afternoon the entire boat load of passengers was jammed into one tug boat. It was so crowded that once seated it was impossible to move hand or foot for four hours. Exhausted, we finally reached the hotel near midnight and three Boston girls and myself thought ourselves fortunate to be four in a room engaged by Peg, which by some miracle had been held for me.

We decided to wait over the next day and in the afternoon a cousin of Miss Saltonstall's took us to

see a 2,000 bed base hospital of the Massachusetts General Unit outside the city. It was a great orderly establishment, entirely empty — waiting.

ENFANTS DE LA FRONTIERE

THOSE first few days after Peg and Nell had met me, on November 10th, in the mists of the railroad station were spent half in bewilderment at being in wartime Paris and half in feeling completely natural at being with Peg again. The first surprise was to find all the discomforts a myth. We had comfortable rooms at the Hotel Vernet with open fire and a bathroom with hot water and plenty of food. I gave myself a week to rest before attempting to go to the office. It was a confused week of meeting old friends, steamer friends and French friends, of meeting many new people, of wandering alone about Paris and of getting sick from eating war bread.

One afternoon Lucinda Bateson, who worked for the Children of the Frontier, drove us to Presles where a group of little boys were being looked after in a convent which was under Peg's direction. A soft blue haze hung over the fields making the green look brighter and yellower and the autumn color more glowing. A Mother Superior, who looked like a grenadier surprisingly clothed in a nun's dress, let us in through a doorway in a blank wall into a bare graveled court. There was nothing green in it, no color anywhere — gray walls, gray sky, black dresses, black pinafores. The children's cheeks alone glowed red and their poor little hands were purple, puffed up like pincushions with chil-

blains. The class room was so damp that drops of moisture trickled down the walls. The children sat in rows on narrow benches and chanted Latin prayers in unison—*In Spiritu Sancto* and a kick on the shins of the boy next.

Another afternoon Peg went with me to get my *carte d'identité*, without which one could not stay in Paris, and I had my first experience of French officialdom. Struggling in line for papers of all kinds later became a habit. While I was waiting she pulled out her card which was very ragged and asked if she might have a new one. The old fonctionnaire turned purple and waggled his finger in her face. "Mademoiselle, I must get some one to scold you." Out he rushed and returned with a red faced fat man with snapping eyes and a mane of black hair standing on end. Trembling with rage he poured out a torrent of rapid French, shouting, "Mademoiselle, do you not realize that is an important paper? Do you think we can give them every day to people who take no care of them?" The first old man turned slyly to me and with his finger beside his nose said, "Here now is a young lady who cares for her papers. If, like her, you would spend a few sous on a pocketbook for them you would not have to be scolded in this way."

At the end of a few days I went to the office which was very near Place Clichy just under Montmartre. Le Comité Franco-Américain pour les Enfants de la Frontière had had its beginnings in the early part of the war when refugees from the north first flooded Paris and children whose fathers

were in the army were driven from their homes and were roaming shelterless in the streets. Private charity had cared for them and finally had gathered them into groups which were cared for in convents and monasteries in Paris and nearby towns. The nuns and priests gave their services and the children were clothed and fed by American money. Each colony was under the supervision of an American woman working for the Committee. The whole was under the direction of a board headed by Mr. Jaccaci who supplied the electric power that kept it all going. At the end of the war it had gained the reputation of having worked more successfully with the French than any other American relief organization, but the very fact that it was run with French economy and in French ways often made it difficult for the Americans working for it who did not understand these ways. Mr. Jaccaci had a pointed white beard, full red lips and benevolent but irritable forehead and eyes. His warm and generous nature kept him in a constant state of repentance for the results of his extreme irritability. At one time or another he was in a state of war with almost everyone who worked for him, but each time he felt so really badly afterwards that there were few who did not forgive him.

The office was a big bare room which had been a studio. The north wall was all of glass which made for the maximum of cold and sunlessness. At a table in the middle sat the head of the paid office force, Mme. Galaza, a handsome dark woman from the Midi with a violent temper and strident voice.

The little typists scuttled about in terror under the lash of her tongue and the poor doddering old refugee who tended the stove would become completely befuddled and fill the room with clouds of black smoke which settled down in dust over all the desks and papers. At intervals there would be an eruption through the door of Mr. Jaccaci's private office at the side and some poor creature would fly out driven before his wrath.

I was given a desk and started typing and copying, which I did slowly and badly. There followed unhappy days of doing odd jobs and ineffectual bits of work. Whenever I ventured to ask Mr. Jaccaci to give me something definite to do he would pat me on the shoulders and say "My child, your work will be just what you make it," which made me feel worse than ever for I so obviously had not made it anything. But for occasional chances to visit the colonies and but for the absorbing life of war time Paris outside the office it would have been too hard to find one's vague romantic expectations turned into a realization that all one was doing was to help eat up French food.

As Christmas approached it became a little better, for I was allowed to help with the Christmas shopping and the getting of presents ready to distribute. One morning at the office we were searching for a little doll for the figure of the Christ child in a *crèche*. One of the French typists dove into a box and triumphantly called, "Ah, voilà un gentil petit Jesu!" and held up a Kewpie. Christmas week was a happy time. We went to Christmas trees and

parties at the different colonies and in each one the little faces looked more shining and radiant than in the last. At Grandbourg there was a short tableau of the nativity and before the curtain went down the little Virgin and the Christ Child and the Angels came to the front and sang the "Star Spangled Banner" in French. Perhaps the most original entertainment was an improvised one at Presles. One of the little boys had once been to the movies and a jolly fat old nun asked if we would like to see Meriot "faire le cinema." We sat in a circle with a handsome imposing priest established in a large armchair in the place of honor. Meriot then proceeded with another little boy to invent a lively scene of an old verger who in dusting knocked over and broke an image of St. Christopher. He was terrified at the thought of what the priest would do to him when he discovered it. Suddenly he had the inspiration of putting one of the choir boys on the pedestal and dressing him in the Saint's clothes. The priest came and all went well till the verger in an excess of zeal bent before the image to cross himself and hot wax from the candle in his hand fell on the toes of the boy who leaped off the pedestal with a shriek. The old nuns rocked back and forth with laughter but the handsome priest remained unsmiling.

Peg had found it increasingly difficult to follow any reasonable course that seemed to her right. Mr. Jaccaci really persuaded himself that he wanted each head to work out her own problems, but he was by nature a dictator and could not help decid-

ing everything himself down to the smallest detail. We both decided that there was too great a sense of frustration to make it desirable to stay on and both asked Mr. Jaccaci if we might leave as soon as we found something else to do. We left him with a feeling of warm affection.

AMERICAN RED CROSS

4 PLACE DE LA CONCORDE

ON January 14th I started working in the office of Dr. Burlingame at the Red Cross headquarters at 4 Place de la Concorde. My especial job was to be the interviewing of people who asked for Dr. Lambert and Dr. Burlingame and the sorting out of those who really needed to see them from those who could be attended to by someone else. The office was indescribably busy and confused. The direction of the whole medical, surgical and nursing department of the Red Cross was crowded into two small back rooms. In Dr. Burlingame's room, which had to be passed through to reach Alex Lambert's office, there were twelve desks with barely room to pass between them, four typewriters clicking, and a constant line of people waiting to speak to Dr. Burlingame or passing in and out to see Alex.

At first I was profoundly depressed because the two men whose job I was to take over were staying on. They were both doctors waiting for orders and filling in time with odds and ends of office work. One of them spent two days rocking on the hind legs of his chair with occasional excursions to Maxim's next door. He broke two chairs in two days. Was that to be my part minus even the excursions to Maxim's?

Happily by degrees the interviewing and interpreting and writing answers to requests became both interesting and amusing. Every sort of person was drawn into the Red Cross net. I interviewed inventors, whole armies of masseurs whose happiness in life seemed to hang upon rubbing American soldiers, Duchesses who wanted things for their private hospitals, soldiers who wanted to see a doctor and French girls without training who wished to nurse. One morning I dealt with a crazy man, with a Montenegrin soldier who had a toothache, a poilu looking for an American officer whose name he had forgotten and a lady who wished to show lingerie to the heads of the department. A French lady whose heart burned with a longing to lighten the misery of war wrote that she would like to give to the world an old family remedy that had been handed down from generation to generation and, knowing the great heart of Dr. Lambert, she hastened through him to offer it for only 1,000 francs to the American Red Cross which had given France a new heart to carry on the war. The remedy was for piles. The most interesting work was occasional interpreting for French and Belgian doctors and translating French medical papers to be read at the inter-allied medical meetings.

In January we moved to the Hotel de France et Choiseul. One night towards the end of the month, just after getting to bed, I heard aeroplanes making a great buzzing and the distant sound of guns. Bed was just beginning to be warm and I had imagined *alertes*, so often that I thought, "oh, it's nothing,"

and turned over and went to sleep. On the way to the office in the morning I saw a crowd in the Place de la Concorde near the corner of the Champs Elysées and going over found a French plane which in trying to land had struck a wing against one of the bronze pillars that stand about the Place and had crashed on the pavement. One man had been killed and another hurt. The office was full of excitement over the raid and everyone was talking at once, telling about fifty machines up and bombs dropping in every direction and a fire started near Montmartre.

Through February and March the raids became more frequent and serious. The France et Choiseul had a famous cellar dating back to days when there had been a monastery there, but I so hated the feeling of being caught underground that I could not bear to go down. On February 2nd Peg had left me to go to the Red Cross canteen at Epernay, so I was alone in my little top story room, and when at night during a raid it began to shake and tremble, I pocketed my pride and went down to Nell's and Alex's room. The next day I was lunching in the basement restaurant at the Red Cross when there was a sudden terrific explosion and the window blew in. We ran out to see what had happened and in the northern sky was a great dazzling white cloud like a thunder-head. A munitions factory near St. Denis had blown up. The American ambulances were the first to get there.

Late in February Mr. and Mrs. Ford asked me to go to Chartres with them. The Cathedral seemed

the very spirit of France. The right tower has the same beauty of clear-cut form that French thought and language have and the detail and tracery the same genius for wit and ornament. The glass had been taken down for fear of raids. It was a wonderful day of escape to the serenity and moving nobility of a great cathedral. It was filled with soldiers in blue and women in black. One thought of the many centuries soldiers and women had come there for help in time of war.

In March the work of the Department was reorganized. Alex took charge of supervising research work, arranging inter-allied medical meetings and fostering exchange of knowledge and so on. He moved to an office on the third floor, and Dr. Burlingame remained downstairs in charge of the business of the equipment and personnel of Red Cross hospitals.

On March 23rd I dined with Emily Cross and as we were sitting in her room after dinner there was an *elerte* but no noise of guns or planes and the *berloque* sounded at 10 o'clock. The next morning I went to the new office promptly and just as I reached it there was another *alerete*. There was no one else on the whole top floor and no one else came all morning. About once an hour there was a loud "boom" and then silence again. At four o'clock the *berloque* sounded. Emily and I dined together again and walked by the Tuileries Gardens afterwards. It was a springlike night and the moon was shining on swelling buds and the gardens smelt of damp earth. Again an *alerte*

drove us in. I went to Nell's room and she read home letters while planes flew lower than I had ever heard them, like enormous birds swooping down and beating their wings just over our heads. Again there was an occasional explosion and no barrage. The next morning was Sunday and it was too much to be wakened by the toot of the siren at seven o'clock. Bombs like champagne should be taken after dark. The morning papers said it was a long range gun that carried 75 miles. Could it be possible?

The German offensive was on at the north and the oppression of it was a constant heavy weight on one's heart. Every day we moved pins on our maps and saw the bulge at the north grow larger like a thunder cloud reaching out over France.

Refugees again were driven before the storm. One night Emily and I went to help in the canteen at the Gare du Nord. It was a long, low ceiled underground room with doors at either end. There were tables down the middle with rows of cots at the side. As the refugees came in the first door, the stream was divided down either side of the tables and each one was given a cup of milk, hot chocolate or beer, a hunk of bread and a hard boiled egg. As soon as they finished, they went out the door at the other end and were taken in trucks to temporary barracks. Only those who were too exhausted to go further, or who hoped to find that family from whom they had been separated were on a later train, stayed to sleep on the cots. The next morning those who had relatives were sent to them and

those who had no one to go to were sent to some place designated by the police. Every town in central and southern France had refugees allotted to it to care for. That night only about two hundred came through, a sad backwash of war, forlorn dazed old men and women and bewildered, hungry children swept helplessly along, they knew not where, like growing things torn up by the roots from their banks and tossed by a river in flood.

For the first time Paris seemed empty and the people in the streets sad and subdued. There were no soldiers on leave. The big gun, "La Grosse Berthe," began again. On Good Friday people were killed at Vesper service at Saint Germain. Two weeks later a shell landed in a maternity hospital and killed a mother and baby, and an air raid killed twenty-five and wounded sixty-two. At the end of one rainy day Miss Hoyt and I walked to the Hotel de Ville to see what the raid of the night before had done. I stopped to ask an old woman where it was and as the words "where did the bomb fall last night?" left my lips there was a terrific explosion and the old woman disappeared like a rabbit into a hole. A shell hit about a block away but we did not go to look for it.

The public buildings were protected with sand bags. The column in the Place Vendôme, the portals of Notre Dame, and the statuary on the Arc de Triomphe were piled with them. Wild rumors of German gas bombs to be dropped on the city flew about and the little street level windows lead-

ing to cellars were sealed up with concrete to make them safe.

One lived a curious double life of the spirit. Always at the center of one's being was the thought of the slaughter and horror only sixty miles away, but an obscure instinct towards life turned one back from the thought of it. Emotions so hidden found an outlet in a strange surface gaiety, one almost would say an increased sense of pleasure. Never did spring days seem so beautiful nor life so vital.

At the end of April Alex left for America to be gone for two or three months, and as his office was to be practically closed I asked if I might be sent to Epernay to join Peg. A few days afterwards I took some papers down to Dr. Burlingame. When he found I was leaving he said that if I was going anywhere I must go to Beauvais and explained that when our men of the First, Second and Third Divisions had been brigaded with the French their wounded had fallen into French hospitals, as there was no American hospitalization behind the French lines. They could not tell the French doctors and nurses what they felt and the doctors could only guess at what they were saying. There was no one even to tell a man that he must lose an arm or leg. It was impossible to refuse, and after a short struggle with myself I said that I would go as soon as he could get papers for me.

At the thought of leaving No. 4 Place de la Concorde I realized with a pang how absorbing it had been and how much I should miss the beautiful old building that used so discreetly to house very

different scenes, before it swarmed with American men and women working at tension, anxious to be doing the great things of their imaginations, and fretting at the small things of reality. They worked with great good will and great inexperience, great unselfishness and also with snobbishness, jealousy and heartburning.

It was doubly hard to leave Paris with its shifting, moving scenes of a great epic against a background of beauty. I thought of the soldiers in the uniforms of countries from the world over, streaming in and out of Notre Dame where the flags glowed against the dark stone; of soldiers on the Champs Elysées strolling with their loves towards the Arc de Triomphe, shadowy white against a starry sky; of their young faces under the dim blue street lights, revealing for a second youth and passion and pleasure snatched from the horror so shortly left and so soon to close about them again, that moment's glimpse illumined and intensified by the war as a scene is by a flash of lightning. I saw the Gare du Nord, a great dirty, smoky barn with guttering lights and black shadows at night, and cold and gray and bleak in the early morning, filled with poilus in baggy blue coats, carrying guns and heavy packs and boots and canteens and shapeless packages dangling from bits of string tied about their leather belts, their faces dull and brooding and their eyes haunted, and by the gates the groups of women standing with dead white faces framed in black, their eyes searching the smoke and mist for a last look.

BEAUVAIS

MARY HOYT, whom I had seen something of at the hotel, and who had been all winter a nurse's aide at the big American hospital at Neuilly, was persuaded to go to Beauvais with me. We were to go officially as nurses' aides, with the understanding that we were to be interpreters in the wards. She helped me to collect my uniforms and outfit in the two weeks that we waited for papers. Nurses' aides wore a satisfactorily romantic costume, a blue cotton dress with white muslin bonnet, collar and cuffs while on duty; and for the street a long dark blue cloth cape with a red cross on a white background over the heart, and a blue silk French coif.

On May 7th we started north in a train full of soldiers going back to the front. Miss Boggs, another aide, ordered to a different hospital in Beauvais, joined us at the station. We arrived after dark. There was no one to meet us so we set out to find our way to the hotel, guided through the black streets by an old man who pushed our bags in a wheelbarrow, and who seemed to take great pleasure in repeating to us that there was no use in our going to the hotel for there were surely no rooms to be had. The sky overhead was clear transparent green and suspended against it were the ugly black forms of a number of sausage shaped balloons that seemed a grossness in the purity of the spring sky. At last we reached the hotel and found, in spite of

the old man, that there was one bedroom left, fortunately with three beds in it. The first person I saw in the little black hotel office, lighted only by a candle, was Miss Scott, who worked in Dr. Burlingame's office. The next morning we tried to find someone to tell us what to do, and wandered about the town. Each new member of the Smith Unit that we met told us that the doctors all spoke English, or that there were no Americans in the hospitals, or that someone else was doing the job. If Dr. Burlingame had come by just then it would have been an unhappy moment for him.

At last, at 2 o'clock, a Red Cross Lieutenant came for us and took us first to Hospital No. 11 where Miss Boggs was to be left. I went in with her to see Byron VanNess, who Miss Scott had told me was there. I found him in a big ward, distressed at being unshaven and in dirty pyjamas but very content to be leaving that night for Paris. He had a painful but not dangerous shrapnel wound.

After a few moments' talk the Lieutenant carried us off to Hospital No. 38 on the edge of the town. It was a great ugly brick building raised on a little hill above the Champ de Mars with imposing flights of steps leading to it. It had been a boys' Lycée and was now a thousand bed hospital and distribution center for the twenty odd hospitals of Beauvais. We had learned that an evacuation hospital was usually from ten to forty miles behind the lines and received men from front line dressing stations and field hospitals. Only immediate operations were performed in them, every one who could be safely

forwarded to a Base Hospital being sent on. As a usual thing the men were kept only two or three days. A few rare cases who could not be moved were kept as long as six weeks.

Lieutenant Lowrie introduced us to the Médecin Chef and to Mlle. Hilfigère, the head nurse, who took us to our dormitory and left us. We found ourselves in a big room with high, round topped windows on both sides, divided down its length into cubicles made by pinning sheets to strings. There were eight on a side, with a corridor down the middle. We found ours furnished with two iron beds, two school desks and a cracked wash basin on a chair. As there was no pitcher or slop bowl we decided it was purely for convention's sake. At the end of the dormitory was the boys' wash room with a row of tin set basins with only cold water. At five o'clock we were taken down to supper in a gloomy room with concrete walls. About thirty of us sat down on benches at two tables covered with spotty oil cloth and with not enough knives and forks and glasses to go around, and amid a confusing hubbub of high rapid chatter we ate our first meal of boiled beef and a boiled vegetable which we were to meet twice a day for the rest of our stay. It was served by a dirty maid with straggling black locks who we thought must have taken a vow not to change her apron until the end of the war. My heart sank at the thought of having so confidently volunteered to interpret for I could hardly understand a word that was not directly addressed to me. The next morning break-

fast was even more depressing. The dirty dishes of the night before had been left on the table and we pushed them back to make way for a bowl of condensed milk and chicory and a hunk of coarse bread.

So fortified we went to the ward, I, at least, feeling rather shaky. The room, like our dormitory, was light and airy with high windows. We looked anxiously at the men we were to care for. There were only six Americans and one Frenchman in beds at the further end. The head nurse, for the ward, Mme. Longuejacque, came forward to meet us. She was a vulgar looking woman with hard black eyes and a piercing voice but Mlle. Forichon, who assisted her, was calm and gentle with that look of penetrating common sense and tolerance characteristic of so many French women. In a few moments the doctor came in, Dr. Chauvin, a gorgeous individual with an auburn Assyrian beard and full red lips, wearing a blue coat with a great deal of gold on it and long scarlet trousers.

Within an hour we found ourselves thrown headlong into nursing. Miss Hoyt was sent to the operating room with a boy named Hanson who was only nineteen and who had a ghastly shoulder and arm wound which had become infected and had to be opened and cleansed. Coming out of ether he clung to me screaming and crying. All day he teased and cried for water like a child. In the bed next to Hanson was a humorous looking Georgian with a shaved head and a hooked nose who looked like an owl, and in the corner opposite a youngster

named Dean Raines who had been shot through the left breast just escaping his heart. He had large, shining gray eyes with long lashes. The nurses called him "le petit serieux." Further on was a hard looking nut who at first was shy about asking us for anything, but go over it quickly and completely. Opposite him was another still harder looking one who greatly preferred the attentions of the *femme de ménage*.

The doctors and nurses we soon found knew nothing of any understanding about our being interpreters. From our dress they supposed us to be nurses and since we obviously knew little about it they treated us as apprentices. There being no nursing schools in France their own nurses had been started just so in the wards and learned as they could as they went along. By the end of the week we realized how fortunate we were, for in an American hospital a nurse's aide did the most uninteresting and mechanical jobs, such as making beds and cleaning tables and so on, all of which were here done by *femmes de ménage*. We were expected to attempt anything that could be asked of a nurse. Since that was the accepted way of training, the doctors and nurses were patient and helpful in teaching us. The first two days Mary Hoyt, who had helped with dressings at Neuilly all winter, stayed with the men while their wounds were dressed. They were carried from their beds by the old *infirmiers* and placed upon a table in a small room at the end of the ward. On the third day I screwed up my courage to take my turn.

They shrieked and cried "God help me, Christ help me," over and over as their terrible wounds were unbound and ether poured on the raw flesh. Hanson's arm had turned green and felt cold and dead as I held it. Later, after it was over, I did everything a nurse should not do; I cried sitting beside Hanson and writing a letter home for him, I nearly fainted when they gave him a painful hypodermic, and almost forgot his medicine. Two days later as I gave him a cigarette that he had been teasing for all the morning, he smiled up at me and said, "I sure do hope they leave me alone today, I'm restin' so comfortable," and I knew that in a few moments I must tell him that they were going to operate that afternoon and take his arm off and, what I must not let my face or voice tell him, the doctor had said that there was hardly a chance for him to live through it. The next morning I entered the ward dreading to hear that he had died and found instead that his temperature was down and that he was better. The doctor said it was "épatant." Once more he teased and teased for water, for a cigarette, for a pickled cucumber, and alternately cajoled and wept.

In the afternoon everything was quiet and Made-moiselle Forichon sent Mary and me both off. We found a spot under an apple tree and spreading our coats on the grass lay in the warm sun and looked up at the heavenly soft spring sky and watched the clouds. In the far distance we could just hear the guns. Just as I had dozed off an old man appeared, in a high rage at us for lying on

his grass, and drove us out. Feeling sympathetic with Eve we wandered on through a forlorn cemetery, made hideous with bead wreaths and iron crosses. There we met a sad little procession following two coffins covered with American flags. A vague sentiment of sympathy prompted us to join it and take part in the service which was read by Dr. Miel. Two gassed men had died in hospital.

Just as we entered the ward again, feeling that we had as much drain upon our emotions as we could stand in our own work without going to funerals, we saw Hanson being carried to the dressing room in the arms of the old orderly. He had a bad hemorrhage. The poor, silly boy had become impatient and in spite of warnings had turned himself over in bed and pulled apart the ligatures. He begged me to stay with him. His arm had been cut off at the shoulder joint and the dressing was like an operation without ether. He suffered pure agony. When he was put back in his bed the doctor made me tell him that if he moved again he would die in ten minutes. The other men in the ward had all become impatient with him because he kept them awake at night.

The next day Hanson, by some miracle, was getting well, but the poor little, big-eyed serious one was worse. His lung had filled and had to be drained. He dreaded the operation. I went down with him and watched Dr. Chauvin take out a piece of a rib and put a drain into the lung. Already I had a strangely possessive feeling about these poor suffering children.

Several new men came into the ward. There was a French aviator who had fallen four times and been wounded five times and was the gayest person in the room. He had been shot through the breast, had a bayonet wound in the breast, had been shot through the leg, broken an arm and had then a broken arm and leg, and still was all impatience to be flying again. He showed me all the scars. He had a sweet tenor voice and sat up in bed singing or making diagrams for me of ways to attack, illustrated with graphic gestures and imitations of the sound of his machine gun. I missed his high spirits when he left. Two Arabs were brought in and Jimmy, a tough specimen from Alabama, awoke one morning to find himself in a bed between theirs. His face was a study.

The nurses from the other wards used to come in to see the Americans. One day as I was working over Hanson I looked up to see Queen Victoria standing at the foot of the bed—a grimy Queen Victoria with a dirty Irish lace collar and a mussy white dress, with a black wool one underneath showing through and hanging below—but still with Victoria's profile and figure and dignity. The illusion was complete when she spoke in very perfect English with a British accent, announcing that what the good Lord didn't know you could ask Mme. Longuejacque. She was to become a familiar figure, known as the D. C. A. (Defense Contre Avions) because she wore such a large red cross on her coif, square on the top of the head like the enormous red crosses painted on the roofs of the

hospitals. She played the piano beautifully and always got down to breakfast early and ate up the butter.

In a ward downstairs was a solitary American boy, under the care of another doctor, who had been shot through the windpipe and was slightly shell shocked. He could speak a few words in a gurgling, inarticulate sort of way. I gave him a pencil to write with but he could not make it go and finally pulled a savings bank book out of his pyjama pocket and pointed to the name of one of the officers and said "Father." I asked him if he wanted me to write to him and he said "yes" and then he showed me a photograph of a girl and a letter with her name signed, so I wrote to them both in Prescott, Arizona—which seemed so very far away. I used to go down to see him every day.

Never have I imagined such confusion as reigned in our ward during the hour of dressings. Dr. Chauvin from the dressing room would shout for number 20 to be brought in and the two *infirmiers* would run to get him, while Longuejacques from the other end would scream for Mlle. Forichon, who would clatter down the long shiny floor with high wooden heels. Mary Hoyt and I would rush about making beds, while invariably at that moment a sergeant and his satellites would appear with lunch and the *femmes de manages* would give the hearty diet to men about to take ether and the light diet to those who were strongest, and it would only be straightened out with a great deal of violent gesticulation and excited talking. At the end there

would be a sudden calm and it always seemed that the French people looked particularly refreshed and the Americans exhausted. I came to the conclusion that a capacity for excitability was a symptom of nerves of iron.

At night the men had been left in the care of two orderlies too old to be sent to the Front. One of them looked like a weasel and as I passed him one day I heard him confiding to his companion, "pour moi, je suis libertin." At night I am sure they both lay down on empty beds and slept soundly. One night the weasel had slapped the boy whose arm had been taken off. It hurt his feelings more than anything and he cried when he told me about it. It was therefore a great relief the middle of May to have the Red Cross send a trained nurse, Miss Justice, for night duty.

Just after she came there was a quiet time. Most of the men had been sent on and none had taken their places. The few who were left were all doing well. From outside vague ominous reports drifted in, for we never saw any newspaperrrs, that the German advance continued and we knew that at any moment we might be engulfed. Almost always at night we could hear the guns. That soft padding thud would somehow wake one from the soundest sleep to unhappy inner pictures of agony which had gained a reality they had not had before. It was reported that an American Red Cross hospital had been opened in another school in the town.

* * *

May 28th was one of those happy, peaceful afternoons when the long ward was full of air and sun and quiet. A few people came in to see the Croix de Guerre given to Hanson. Dr. Chauvin had on his most gorgeous scarlet trousers. Mlle. Hilfigère, who was tall and had a fine figure and large eyes, looked very handsome. The Médecin Chef was fine looking too, a *vieux garçon*, gray and close shaven. There were several Smith College girls and a Red Cross man. The boy, newly shaved and scrubbed, was appealingly young and handsome and his engaging smile won everyone. He had to be prompted to thank the doctor. The other men were half scornful and half indulgent. The doctor asked us into his little room to drink the boy's health and gave some champagne to the men. Mme. Longuejacque's jokes became more and more shady. The looney Frenchman who had a head wound got a little loonier and wandered out of the dressing-room clad only in a vacant smile, causing great giggling and commotion among the *femmes de ménage*. It was a quiet, tranquil day.

At 1 a. m. we were awakened by the guns. Bombs were falling and the building shook. Miss Hoyt and I scrambled into our clothes and went to the ward. Miss Justice was on night duty and was in the midst of giving a hypodermic to a giant Russian American who was coming out of ether. There was only a night wick screened from the window to see by. The man was waving his one arm about and talking incoherently and violently in Russian while bombs and machine guns and shrap-

nel made a lively noise. A gasoline storage dump was hit not very far away and there were brilliant flames and a great rolling cloud of smoke. The men were mostly quiet and talked little. The Croix de Guerre boy had a toothache and sat propped up in bed boo-hooing like a baby. Twice we went to bed and twice the warning gun sounded and we got up again.

The next day Miss Hoyt was asked to go to another hospital where sixty gassed men had just been brought in. I went on duty in the morning to find that some thirty new men had been brought in during the night. Dr. Chauvin had been sent to the front and Mme. Longuejacque had simply left to pack up her furniture and get ready to evacuate her house in the town, and didn't turn up 'till after 10 o'clock. I started to wash up and was just well into it when three new doctors arrived. Everyone's papers were in confusion. Dr. Chauvin had let everything go for the last three days before leaving and almost every man in the ward had to be examined or dressed. I was called downstairs to interpret for a man who was to be operated on. All the operations were done in a mobile tent hospital which was set up in the court. An amputation was not supposed to be performed without a man's permission. I stayed and watched the surgeon take a piece of broken bone out of the forearm. That was no sooner over than I was called to the entrance room where the new men were brought. I entered a dark, concrete room and found a row of stretchers on the floor filled with dirty ragged men covered

with mud and blood and exhausted by the agony of the trip down in jolting ambulances. Each man had a tag tied to him telling what his wound was and what had been done for him at the front field hospital. I was asked to go to the cleaning up room with a big American who had a wound in the back which had touched his spine. His legs were partly paralyzed and it caused him exquisite agony when they were touched. He was carried to a small hot tent and placed on a wooden table to wait for an X-Ray examination. The radiologist was sick and it was two hours before another was found. The man had strong heavy shoulders, narrow hips and white skin and handsome, coarsely cut features. As he lay on the table half propped up on one arm and with his head thrown back in pain he looked like the dying gladiator. I had learned that there is sometimes a wonderful beauty of suffering. He said he was a chauffeur and had been shot twice before in street rows in New York but that the pain had been nothing like this. He soon became partly delirious and called over and over for his mother. "Oh, mama, if you could see me. You don't know where I am; you can't see me in hospital. Oh, the beasts. I could have hit him but I didn't and he got me in the back. I crawled to my gun and I cut him in two. Lady, please a little water." The tent got hotter and he tried to get up. I had to hold him down on the table. The time seemed interminable. I began to cry but was ashamed to be found and pulled myself together. At last they took him to the X-Ray room and finally to the operating

room. He made me promise I would be with him when he came out of ether. I went back to the ward to find Jimmy, the toughest man in the room, in tears. His leg had been badly neglected and he was suffering horribly. Dr. Chauvin was very careful and skilful with the men who interested him but those whom he did not like he left pretty much to nature. The new doctor said Jimmy must be operated on at once so I went down with him and saw him under ether and then back to the entrance room. A man with a shock of red hair, very dirty and unshaven was lying on a stretcher. When I bent over him to read his tag he suddenly realized it was an American woman. A really lovely smile lit up his face as he said, "Girlie, you sure look good to me — but then I haven't seen a woman for nine months!" I saw him under ether too. He had a dreadfully smashed right arm. When I got back to the ward three men were all coming out of ether. The big chauffeur was singing a pious song in a quavering voice. He suddenly became quite violent. When I told him he must be quiet he said in a drunken voice, "you're the boss." I thought he called me "Boche," but he was indignant. "Never call you 'Boche.' No 'Boche' ever touch you when I'm roun'." Jimmy on the other side of the room was cursing and calling unpleasant names over and over again. I went over and told him he must stop and to my great astonishment it penetrated to his consciousness and he did stop at once. The little boy with the dreadful wound through his breast

was groaning and I tried to rub his back with one hand and keep the chauffeur quiet with the other.

Miss Justice finally appeared for night duty and I flopped on my bed all dressed. At ten o'clock I was trying to summon enough energy to undress and get into bed when suddenly the curtain parted and Boggs peered in. She had been asked by the American Hospital to come to help in a rush and to bring me with her. Reluctant and grumbling I wearily dragged off the bed and crammed my aching feet back into my shoes and we crept down the black stairway and out into the dark. We were both hazy as to the whereabouts of the American Hospital, which had only been opened the day before and we stumbled and groped our way along a path through what looked in daytime like a village green, where the ambulances and camions were parked. At last we saw a light and knocked at a gate in a blank wall and asked our way of a sleepy soldier. He went for someone else and finally after a great deal of talk a soldier came out and led us a short way through dark streets and into a courtyard—the hospital at last. There was great confusion. Men were being unloaded from ambulances and stretchers were being carried in every direction. No one knew where we were to go or what we were wanted to do. Suddenly we spied Dr. Clark in the entrance room looking over the men as they were brought in and deciding which must be operated on first. Suddenly “Boom”—the warning gun—an air raid! The lights were put out—all but one that was covered, and the work went on

in the dimness. Dr. Clark asked me to go upstairs to beg for morphine hypodermics. I groped my way up and into a big ward. There were no window shades and through the high French windows one saw the blue of the night sky. Suddenly the flash of falling shrapnel made a streak of light across the blue and high up overhead was the rata-tat-tat of a machine gun. On both sides of the room and in double rows down the middle were the shadowy forms of cots, the pillows showing in a lighter gleam, and all about in the dark was the sound of the stirring and muttering and groaning of a hundred wounded men. In the middle of the room was the second's spurt of light of an electric torch. I made my way towards it and bumped into the good solid figure of Dr. Greenough of the Smith unit. She gave me a box of hypodermics and a bottle of iodine and I groped my way downstairs again. Dr. Clark asked me to help in the washing-up room next door. It was a small square room with concrete walls and floor and high windows almost to the ceiling. The one electric light was painted blue and shed a queer dim theatrical light on the dozen boys lying on stretchers on the floor. Two old French women were kneeling on the floor beside them bathing them. Suddenly there was a terrific tearing, crashing explosion. The glass of one of the windows cracked. A Red Cross man helped me lift the stretchers away from under the windows so that glass would not fall on them. Crash followed crash and always high up above all was the sharp short rattle of the machine gun. A hand-

some young doctor came running in looking for his wife who was a nurse, threw his arms about her and gave her a farewell kiss. A touch of the melodramatic suddenly made the whole thing seem like a scene from the movies. He pulled the mattress from a cot on to the floor and crouched there with his wife and another nurse and called to me to come too. The very last thing in the world I wanted to do was to sit still and think about what might happen. I said so to a big fat ambulance boy who was standing beside me and he took me by the arm and said "that's right, Sis, what can I get you?" He brought me a basin of hot water and I found a towel and a piece of soap and fell to on a poor boy and washed him as he had never been washed before. Another boy on the stretcher beside me who was not very badly hurt sat up to wash himself and his white body gleamed in the blue light as he splashed and scrubbed and splashed as thoroughly and calmly as if he had been at home. Nothing was going to spoil that bath for him and finally he rolled up in his blanket with that expression of combined luxury and virtue that a bath gives to one who has been long without it.

The aeroplanes passed and there was a lull. Suddenly I heard behind me a high voice crying and protesting and thought "what a strange voice for a man." I turned and peered down over the shoulder of the doctor and there on the floor was a poor old woman with blood pouring from a bad wound in her leg. She and two wounded Frenchmen had been brought in from the street.

We finished washing the men and as no more were brought in I went back to the big ward upstairs. One of the Smith College girls, who had come in to help out, asked me to lend a hand with a poor English boy. He was utterly helpless, wounded in both arms and both legs and shell-shocked. He kept going over some dreadful experience. "Oh, why did they leave him in that hole—the poor fool! They are going to get me, I know they will. It's my fate. Don't leave me lady—stay and talk to me—they'll get me if you go." Suddenly the warning gun again, the booming of the anti-aircraft, the rattling machine gun and a crash. The boy began calling out loud, and always all about was the groaning and low cursing of the other wounded men. The raid ended in a few moments as suddenly as it had begun.

At one o'clock Miss Boggs came with word that we were to go home and we drove back through the empty black streets with four soldiers. I arrived to find that a bomb had fallen in the court and that every window on one side of our ward was broken. There was a rain of glass and the beds were full of it. The Médecin Chef had ordered the men to be taken down to the cellar and the Italian orderlies were just carrying the stretchers down in the dark. The new doctor came in after the Médecin Chef had left and said that any of the men who wanted to stay up might do so. Most of them decided to stay. Dr. Deschamps asked me to go down to the cellar with him to see where the men were placed. A row of thirteen men from our ward,

American and French, were lying on stretchers in a cellar passage. There was no one else to look after them and it was an hour before anyone came, except the doctor who brought a few essential supplies. It was a strange feeling to be alone with wounded men in a black cobwebby coal cellar. I sat at the head of the row on a little hard school bench wrapped tight in my long blue cape. Three of the poor men had been operated on that day. One had had his leg amputated and was suffering hideously from the hard stretcher and from the jolting trip down.

I finally got to bed at 3 a. m. and up again at seven the next morning and worked all day getting the glass swept up and the ward in order. There was a report that the hospital was to be evacuated and people were leaving town. It was impossible to know if it were true but it seemed very doubtful, at least, that the American hospital, opened the day before, would be closed again.

The next night there was another bombardment and we were again ordered to the cellar with the men. I tried to get some sleep on an extra stretcher near a pile of dusty school desks but the stretcher smelt of blood and it kept me awake.

* * *

Hanson and all but four of the other Americans had been sent on. The chauffeur was more difficult than anyone to care for. He wanted to be waited on every minute and made a thousand excuses to be fussed over. One day in the dressing room he

announced that he was Teddy Welch, the lightweight champion who had knocked out Carpentier. Dr. Deschamps who was interested in *le boxe* plied him with questions and when I said with unexpected knowledge that he looked too heavy for a lightweight and that I thought Teddy Welch was an Englishman, he murmured something about there being two Teddy Welch's, and looked chagrined. I had never thought to find myself giving a bath to a prize fighter and brushing his teeth for him.

It was a great relief the next day to be moved to another ward under our new young doctors. Our old ward had become completely demoralized after the departure of Dr. Chauvin and, moreover, all the decent beds and mattresses had been carried off and our men had been given hard, lumpy corn husk ones. I met the Médecin Chef one morning and asked if I might spend some money that had been given me to buy new ones, and perhaps that touched his pride.

Going into a new ward was like going into another world. Dr. Claverie was a blonde, pink cheeked, excessively clean looking young man with a passion for patient thoroughness and for the technique of asepsis. He was thoroughly *bon bourgeois*. Dr. Deschamps, also young, was a good looking homely man with a fine athletic figure, always encased in a perfectly fitting horizon blue uniform. His manners were charming and he had an amused, slightly malicious glint in his brown eyes. He was more *chic* and less conscientious than

Claverie. It was a relief to leave Longuejacque behind and to find the head ward nurse, Mme. Poulet-Despuy a gentle, delicate, middle aged woman, and to sense ourselves in an atmosphere of orderliness and cleanliness.

Little Dean Raines and the red haired boy with a bad arm and the giant Russian were the only Americans left us and we devoted ourselves to spoiling them. The Russian, whose head looked as though it had been clumsily carved from a block of granite, every morning during the agonizing dressings of his amputated arm and bad leg cursed steadily in slow painful English. The moment it was over someone would put a cigarette between his lips and light it for him and a beaming smile would spread slowly over his face. Every morning Dean would say plaintively, "Lady, I sure do crave a tomato," so one day I saw one in the market and brought it back and he sat up in bed with a little reluctant smile as he ate it.

* * *

We continued to be bombarded almost every night. A new order was issued that only nurses on night duty were to stay with the men during raids. All the others had to sleep in a room near the head of the cellar stairs and go down at the sound of the warning gun. There were no cubicles and we slept in beds close together. There were cooties in the beds. We slept in our clothes to be ready to go down to the cellar and at the sound of the gun it looked like an old picture of the "Last

Judgment" as we all rose from our beds and ran. Sometimes we would go down three times in a night. At night I would put on my "costume de cave,"—change my dress and tie my head up in a white coif to keep out cooties and coal dust—and at dawn I would creep out and up to my bed upstairs for a few hours' quiet sleep before changing my clothes again to go on the ward.

The men were carried down to the cellar at five o'clock after supper every night and taken up again at dawn. The stretchers were placed in rows almost touching each other with just barely room to step between the rows. The ground was black and by morning the sheets were grimy so they gave up using sheets and the men lay between blankets which, of course, were just as dirty but didn't show it so much. By morning the men's hands and faces looked like coal miners' and every outside bandage had to be changed. There were occasional very small windows high up on the level of the ground, but after the first night they were closed for fear of a *courant d'air*. There were no sanitary arrangements but buckets and before morning the air became foul and heavy. Sleeplessness and waiting in suspense wore on the men's nerves. The sound of the guns and the bombs was little muffled. Once again a bomb landed in the court of the hospital, digging a pit about twenty feet deep but doing no serious damage. Little Raines became all eyes and began to cough again. All night long for several nights a Frenchman, whose stretcher touched the head of his, screamed and groaned.

The stretchers were cruel to the wounds. It was a grim awakening from ether for a man who had had his leg cut off in the afternoon. He must have wondered if he had waked up in Hell.

One night when I was on duty there were five men, each with an arm or a leg amputated, one of whom was coming out of ether, also a man with a fractured skull who had to be tied to his stretcher to keep him from falling out, a man with pneumonia, one who vomited steadily from seven in the evening till five in the morning and spit blood, and a little negro who made a strange pitiful crying sound like a hurt animal whenever he was awake.

By degrees the cellar was made cleaner, the walls were whitewashed and electric lights put in but nothing could alter the feeling of having like an animal sought safety in a hole in the ground. It hurt some deep-seated instinct of human pride.

* * *

During the day life slipped along in a calm enough routine. There were not many in the ward and we had hours free to wander about the town. The central market square always had an unreal look of stage setting with its old timbered houses and dignified Renaissance Hôtel de Ville, as though it were a painted background for the groups of soldiers — a band of chasseurs whirling their curved brass trumpets as they marched — an American machine gun battery that rolled in from the front and drew up about the square, the men's faces

covered with a mask of white dust. As I stood watching them an old French woman behind me exclaimed, "Ah quels sauvages!" It flashed through my mind that it was true that they looked harder and more cruel than a group of French soldiers. As I was pondering on it and looking up at an enormous truck with a group standing in it, a giant jumped over the side and coming up to me said, "Say, Nurse, can you tell me the name of a nurse up there in a hospital on the hill?" and then with a closer look, "Why, you're the one!" He was a big Irishman who had been in the ward the night of the first bombardment and had considerably chastened Alabama Jimmy in the next bed for his language when coming out of ether. As I looked up at his friendly smile I wondered how I could a moment before have thought American soldiers looked hard and cruel.

The middle of June Mary Hoyt came back from the town one day and said, "I saw your sister down on the square; she is at the American hospital." I had had letters from her two weeks before telling of a break in the line at Epernay and of working in an operating room during bombardments, an experience that made Beauvais seem tame, but the very day before a postal had come from Paris saying there was no chance of her being sent to Beauvais. As soon as I could get off I rushed down and there, sure enough, she was and Emily Cross too and three other girls from Epernay.

Soon after the opening of the American hospital night nursing duty was established at No. 38 and

the French soldiers were no longer left to the sole care of old orderlies. One day as I was walking down the balcony overlooking the court on my way from lunch to my ward, the nurses whom I was with asked me if I would go on night duty alone that night. I protested that I was not a nurse and was far too ignorant and incompetent to look after forty men alone, for night duty meant double duty, looking after one's own ward and another strange one. Mme. Poulet answered that they were short of nurses and that it made very heavy duty unless everyone took her turn and added that at least I could feel that I was better than no one and that I had had experience of night duty in the cellar and it was not very different. It was impossible to refuse but I said that if I must do it I begged they would clearly understand that if any men died as a result of my ignorance that it was the hospital's fault and not mine. "Oh, Mademoiselle," they cried in chorus, "c'est dans les mains du bon Dieu." So I began going on night duty twice a week, which meant doing a twenty-four hour turn and sleeping till afternoon the next day. In my own ward I felt a little confidence. I knew the men and what their wounds were and what the treatment was, but always when I crossed the hall and opened that other door which gave with a terrible harsh squeak I entered a mysterious world. Through the great tall windows a dim light fell on the long double row of beds and in each bed was a man suffering I knew not what agonies, a man never seen but by the light of a

shaded lantern or of dawn, never spoken to except in whispers and only faltering words about the terrible business of forcing ether down rubber drains, or the giving of painful great hypodermics of camphorated oil. The orderly was a priest, a tall bearded shadow of a man who comforted and strengthened his suffering children tenderly. The first night of all two men died and he was nurse and priest, doing all that had to be done. He comforted me too, telling me that both men were dying when I came and that there was no hope for them. One had a broken spine and the other gangrene. They were the first men who had died in my care.

One later morning in the first gray dawn a slender red-haired boy was brought in and put to bed. His face was grayish white with lavender circles under his eyes. His blue eyes alone looked living and even as I hurt him he turned and smiled and a radiance shone through his transparent flesh. He closed his eyes and said very clearly "je crois en Dieu" and died.

* * *

All that week I had cared for a big handsome fair-haired boy with bright blue eyes, who had been trepanned and was entirely unconscious. The men with head wounds were restless and threw themselves about in the bed and usually had to be tied in. There was something peculiarly touching about their helplessness and unconsciousness. Some obscure response to sympathy would make them turn to one person rather than another and this

poor fellow who was troublesome to the orderlies was always quiet with me. For the hour before he died he clung to my hand and I liked to think that there was a sense of some one there, that perhaps in some dim way he thought it was someone belonging to him. His death brought back memories of old griefs and that afternoon I went to a little park behind the hotel and sat on a bench facing the sunset and wept bitterly. One lived on the surface for weeks, and even months, and then suddenly the calm would break and waves would rise and sweep over one of revolt and despair at the cruel, senseless waste and agony of war. I could hear the guns and hated them with all my soul and for the first time felt no accompanying thrill of excitement. No one paid any attention to so usual a sight as a woman weeping.

* * *

The next week our ward was almost empty and I got permission from Red Cross headquarters to go to Paris overnight on leave to get a power of attorney at the American Consulate for some family business at home. My first feeling in Paris was one of lightheartedness and escape and beauty. It was a heavenly June day with a blue sky and white clouds. The old hotel seemed luxurious and the food perfectly delicious. I gloated over the thought of a bath-tub and hot water and a room to sleep alone and a clean bed, but after doing my business and walking back down the Boulevards I began to wonder, "Why am I not happier? This should be

thrilling." I went to visit the Red Cross and as I entered the office the old mood of dissatisfaction and frustration settled down on my heart. Life in Paris seemed heartless and empty. The next morning I fled back to Beauvais feeling happier with each jolt of the flat wheel under me that took me back to my ward.

When I got back I found Mary Hoyt had been recalled to Paris and three days later Miss Justice was sent to another hospital so I found myself the only American left.

* * *

Peg and Emily and I spent our spare time when possible walking in the country. We found a grassy hill and lay under an apple tree and looked down at the town lying in a hollow surrounded by hills. Wherever we went we could see the beautiful high mass of the cathedral rising towards the sky in the center of the town. As we came home towards dusk we would meet crowds of people carrying bedding and heavy bundles to sleep in the fields away from bombs. One afternoon as we passed a wretched street that had the night before been reduced to ragged walls and heaps of stone and plaster I suddenly felt a horrible qualm of fear and panic dread of the night to come. During the bombardments it was so exciting and usually there was so much to do that I had never felt afraid. To my intense relief it was all right when night came, but it was a nasty feeling while it lasted.

The American hospital sent its nurses to spend the nights at a villa outside the town, and, apparently touched in its pride, our hospital decreed that we likewise should go outside, but to an old people's home that had been evacuated. We slept in the old people's beds and unfortunately they had left reminders behind them. Somehow sleeping in these big wards away out in the country like girls in a boarding school, knowing that I was the only American within miles, seemed the strangest thing I had yet done. It was entirely unassociated with anything I had looked forward to. There was a bombardment the first night and then never another, but every night a madman howled in a room nearby. After two weeks of being hustled into American Red Cross trucks immediately after finishing work and of getting up at six the next morning in order to be back in time for breakfast, we were allowed to go back to our own beds. One morning coming in from the country we passed an endless line of trucks bringing Americans from the First Division down for rest after many months forward. They cheered us all down the line and shouted doughboy French at us.

* * *

No Americans were left in the hospital and there were only a few French and Arabs in our ward. The Arabs and Moroccans were always a problem to me. They felt that it was abominable for unveiled women to live in this world of men and do the things that nurses must do, and I found that I

was looked upon as an especial scandal because the nape of my neck was uncovered. The French nurses wore a veil at least behind, while I had only a muslin cap perched on top. When I approached a bed and put out a hand to turn the clothes down the Arab would angrily seize the edge of the sheet and pulling it tight to his chin would violently shake his head saying, "Ne veux pas, ne veux pas." All those in the ward who could move would sit up in bed to watch, and the other Arabs would shout at him a heated exchange of jabbering. Usually I had to accept defeat and get the orderly to do what was necessary.

Sometimes there would be a sudden inroad of men with slight wounds who only stayed a few hours to have them redressed. During one such rush I looked up to see a little dwarf orderly named Napoléon, who had a shock of stiff black hair and wore huge high cowhide boots with baggy trousers tucked in the tops, coming down the length of the ward with his arm about a strange limping little black man who was talking excitedly. He could not be persuaded to lie down on a stretcher, Napoléon explained, though he was coming out of ether. Sure enough, when they put him on a bed and tried to push his head back on the pillow he resisted and sat hunched up, cross-legged, outside the blankets. Whenever anyone approached him his small blood-shot eyes darted with suspicion. Mme. Poulet and I finally decided to leave him alone and told the orderlies to keep away. Just as he was beginning to relax and sag back on the bed Mlle.

Joly entered. She wore clattering wooden heels and had a loud voice. In spite of our warning she ran to him calling "Oh, couche-toi, mon petit, couche-toi," and took him by the shoulder to press him down. I never saw such a look of concentrated malice on any human face as he darted his head forward and hissed "Crapaud!" It was all up. He sat crouched on the bed watching us for an hour till Napoléon scrambled him into a uniform and the strange pair hobbled down the ward and disappeared through the door, the negro still talking.

* * *

When there was nothing to do in my hospital, I used to go down to the American one and get Peg and Emily to give me odd jobs. Often I did errands for the men and sometimes they tried to tip me telling me to keep the change. What I saw of the American surgery there increased my already great respect for the conscientiousness and cleverness of my two young French doctors. It seemed to me that the French were less apt than the Americans to shrink from painful treatments if they felt they would ultimately be better for the men. I saw more charts showing badly infected wounds in my occasional visits to the American wards than in the four months at No. 38. I also twice saw young American surgeons be shockingly careless of technique in doing dressings. The Americans on the other hand cared more about comfort and personal cleanliness

and above all, clean W. C.'s. Those on the hill were disgusting and constituted the one hardship of the life there.

During these quiet weeks I discovered that there were about fifteen American gassed men in a forlorn hospital that looked like a jail. They were cared for by one dirty old French nurse and a doctor who came in from a nearby hospital, so I spent most of the time there for about two weeks. Some of the poor boys had been badly burned by mustard gas, and some had inhaled other gas. It affected their eyes so that they could not stand light and the windows were painted indigo blue, through which filtered a dim ghastly light which made the bare brick room even more gloomy and depressing. One reckless boy escaped and spent the night out and came back the next morning, still drunk. The old orderly scolded me because he was lying on the bed with his boots on, so with the help of another boy I had to take them off and put him to bed. The others were all very angry because as a result they were forbidden to go outside the court. One morning as I was standing in the arched doorway leading from the court, I was startled by the apparition of a young civilian Frenchman, his face dripping with blood and with crimson hands raised above his head, screaming curses in a voice that broke into sobs of rage. It rose to a shriek as he caught sight of the American soldiers beside me. He must have been beaten up by an American.

* * *

The ward was closed completely for a while and

then opened again for three slightly wounded men. I was watching them come out of ether when a note was brought me from Peg saying that she was being sent to Chantilly and that I was to go with her and to be ready in five minutes. I scrambled my clothes into a bag and hurriedly bid the doctors and nurses good-bye and then, of course, waited half an hour. Finally she arrived in a little Ford ambulance and we crawled in on top of a sterilizing machine and a pile of front packages and drove about thirty miles through lovely country with fields of ripe grain under a warm bright light. We found a hospital installed in the racing stables on the estate of Baron Rothschild. The wards were all double walled tents, the best I had ever seen, green outside and white inside and with real beds instead of stretchers. In front of an ornate building were big trees and green lawns dotted with glaring beds of scarlet geraniums. The stalls of the stables had been turned into kitchens, offices and so on, and behind them and at one side were the long green tents. Everywhere was the stir and bustle of a place being created. Nurses and doctors and ambulance men were running about, wounded men were being rolled to the operating tent on wheel tables and others coming out of ether were being taken back to their beds. Those who could walk were wandering about wrapped in blankets. There was a new stir and excitement in the air. The men were full of stories of a great advance and of the number of prisoners taken. Hope went to our heads after the long months of grim holding out.

The tents soon began to smell like a circus. I stayed till midnight in one full of Americans, Senegalese and French. Our men had had almost nothing to eat for three days and had filled up on whatever they could get regardless of coming operations. They were hideously ether sick. The Senegalese made strange wild cries like animals when they were in pain.

The next day instead of staying on one job till I was told to do something else, I ran from one thing to another, wherever I could find work to do. It seemed physically impossible to sit still and wait in the midst of that hurry and commotion. Alas, at five o'clock when Dr. Clark, who was the Red Cross representative from Beauvais, turned up and found that I was not established on a regular job, he said that I must return to Beauvais where they were expecting 1,500 wounded Americans to arrive that night. Rebellious and cursing myself for a stupid fool and not feeling any better because I knew I deserved it, and had thought more about what I wanted to do than about what I had been asked to do, I reluctantly repacked my bag and was carried off. It was hard for an independent spinster to accept military orders.

On the way back we passed through Senlis and I had a moment's glimpse of Emily Cross who had been interpreting for Americans who had been gassed.

I arrived back at Beauvais, feeling very small as I greeted the nurses and doctors to whom I had bid

a last farewell only the day before. I found of course that there was not a single American in the hospital and that none were expected. Not another one came during the rest of my stay.

* * *

The ward continued fairly busy through the rest of August. The men who came were mostly slightly wounded and stayed a short time. We settled down into a regular routine. Claverie had a passion for perfection and there was a sudden burst of having the floors waxed and the beds painted white. The room for dressings was repainted and the nurses dyed gauze green to make curtains for the instrument cabinets and shades for the lights. As what had been exciting vanished into memory and as we busied ourselves with little affairs I began by degrees to be conscious that a whole life of personal relations and intrigue and scandal was going on under the surface about which I had been entirely innocent the first two months. Every minute happening was interpreted from the angle of sex. At first I looked at them in astonishment when they hinted that a middle-aged woman who looked like a peasant was the mistress of the priest because she took such a deep interest in the services for the men who died, which were held in a dark chapel by the morgue; and that Hilfigère was infatuated with Claverie who was fifteen years younger than she, because she showed him how to make a chair by clasping hands to carry a wounded man — the only motive could be to hold his hand. It seemed grotesque — and then one morning I caught myself

looking at my watch as Mme. Mascarelle, "une femme de feu" came into the dressing-room and thinking, "Oh, it's time for the doctor's service, isn't it?"

Mlle. Joly was my fellow worker in the ward under the direction of dear Mme. Poulet. She was tall and fair and rather good looking. She tied her coif in a picturesque way that showed the shape of her head and always wore long dangling earrings. She was a native of Beauvais and every morning brought a big bunch of flowers from her garden for the ward and a small selected bouquet for the desk in the doctors' private office. She pressed the doctors' linen coats and brought them chocolate in the middle of the morning and was engaged in embroidering a black satin covering for the couch in the office where Claverie slept when he was on half night duty, for the surgeons worked in shifts of eight hours on and eight hours off. One day young Deschamps swaggered in and with a shrug asked, "Where is that young lady who scrubs the floor for me?" It was considered a great opportunity for young provincial girls—this hospital work, but poor Joly's transparent efforts were fruitless. Claverie discussed with great frankness his hopes for the future; he would become a woman's specialist in some fashionable resort on the Riviera and he would marry a woman with agreeable manners who would please his patients and help him in his profession and above all he would marry a woman with a *dot*. "What is true that American women really did not have *dots*?" "Yes, quite true."

"Then," laughing incredulously, "you all marry for love?" "Yes, at least we are supposed to." "But," excitedly, "a man gives a woman his name, his position, everything. If she has no *dot* what does she give him?" I said that, moreover in America a woman controlled her own money and could even if she chose leave it to another man than her husband. "Ca, c'est chic" said the nurses.

A battle royal developed between the Médecin Chef of the operating unit and the ward nurses of whom I was one. He outranked the Médecin Chef of the Hospital. His surgical nurses, who lived quite apart from us, belonged evidently to a higher social scale. Though Claverie had introduced me to two or three of them they did not bow when they met me. A rumor flew about that the Médecin Chef of the *Auto Chir*, the operating outfit, was too friendly with one of the women who did secretarial work. A placard was nailed to our dining-room door saying that the character of Mme. C— had been questioned and that an investigation had been held by *M. le Médecin Chef de l'Ambulance Auto Chirurgicale No. 10, ière classe, 2 galons*, and by *M. le Medecin Chef de l'Ambulance No. 38, 2 ième class, 1 galon* and that they could not speak highly enough of her moral character and devotion to duty. It was signed by both of them.

During the night the French equivalent to fiddle-de-dee was written across it. The next day reverberations of anger were felt in the wards and a new placard was placed on our door — and nowhere else — exactly repeating the first, but adding a clause

that such a notice signed by the hands of the above-mentioned Médecins Chefs themselves had been defaced and that if it occurred again the offender would be punished. That night it was torn across by finger nails. Once more it appeared, the wording more majestic and formidable than ever, and that night the classic French offensive word was scrawled across it. The fourth time there was an additional paragraph that the offender would be fined 2,000 francs and be imprisoned for a year! That was evidently beyond joking for then it stayed untouched for weeks. Unable to find who had done it the Médecin Chef sought revenge by appearing in the wards and reducing the nurses to tears. One day he appeared at the further end of our ward and shouted for some one to come. Without thinking, Mme. Poulet said "What is it?" as she advanced to meet him. When we reached him he was red in the face. Pointing to a boy with a painful foot wound, he bellowed at Mme. Poulet "When did you give him morphine?" She stammered, "I understood, Monsieur, that he was only to have it if he seemed to need it." Stamping his foot and clapping his hands together and turning purple, he shouted at her "An order is an order and when I give an order it is to be obeyed." With that he stalked down the ward and at the other end as a parting shot he turned on Mme. Poulet and with immense dignity said "Moreover, do you not know that to say 'What is it?' is not the proper way to address your Médecin Chef?" as though to say, "to address your God."

In the afternoon poor Mme. Poulet was very much upset because Claverie said that the Médecin Chef had complained to him of the *manque de tenue* of his nurses. To me it was only funny but to her after her four years of nursing it was humiliating.

The next morning when I was alone in the ward I was startled to see the Médecin Chef again appear in the doorway. Forewarned this time I made a low bow and followed three steps behind him, standing at attention at each bedside and bowing every time he spoke to me. At the further end he complimented me upon the ward—"He must send all the other orderlies to see how the floors were kept, our lamp shades were perfect, the dressing-room was a model." He drew himself up and bowed graciously to me—and I to him—and disappeared. Later he told Claverie that the *tenue* of the American nurse was perfect. I could only think that he had become fearful that he might have closed a very useful source of Red Cross supplies and comforts and possibly even offended a nurse who not only worked for nothing but paid board.

I had become rather cynical about a good deal of the attention that was paid to me. It sometimes seemed that it was "Vive l'Amerique! Could you let me have some cigarettes?" or "Is there a position to be had in the American Red Cross with a salary of ten thousand francs?" It would all at times have been pure comedy—if it had not been tragedy.

By the end of August it became more and more evident that there would be no more Americans and that there was not one single thing that I did that could not be better done by a French woman. I asked to be relieved and on September 7th did really bid a final farewell. I grieved to think that I probably would never again see those who had become dear friends nor the many who had been truly kind. I had grown to have a deep admiration for those women who had endured four years of cruel work and personal sorrow and privation and who yet met life with courage and gallant gaiety and tender sympathy for the broken men in their care.

Of the poilus themselves I hardly dare to speak. To have had the chance to serve them was a thing to be deeply grateful for. It is not possible to measure the beauty of their courage, of their forbearance, of their qualities of wit and quick perception and their courtesy.

HERICOURT

AFTER leaving Beauvais Peg and I went on two weeks' leave, which was due us, to Normandy, visiting Coutances and Mont St. Michel. Soon after returning to Paris on September 28th we were ordered to Héricourt near Belfort. We met five trained nurses at the train and settled for a long day's trip. We reached Belfort after dark and while waiting for the train to Héricourt we walked about the unlighted streets. They were crowded with black colonial troops from Mangin's 5th Division and with Chasseurs Alpains, usually a sign that trouble was expected.

It was late when we finally arrived, and Peg and I found ourselves quartered in the house of an old peasant woman in upstairs rooms that were reached by an outdoor stairway. It looked very dreary by dim light and still drearier the next morning. The paper was brown and spotted and the rooms were furnished with the barest necessities but, thank goodness, there was a stove.

In the morning we crossed the street and passed through an imposing gate and found a group of dingy looking brick barracks and stables belonging to a French Artillery post. It had been turned into a flu hospital by the French and the buildings they were not using themselves had been given to Americans.

After waiting a long time we were finally met by an American doctor, who told us that a green

hospital outfit just over had been caring for some six hundred American men with flu for a week, with just one trained nurse and one Red Cross Canteen woman to help. Miss Baxter, my nurse, was put in charge of a ward on the third story of a big brick barrack which held some three hundred beds. In her ward were collected the sickest men, especially those who had pneumonia. I was told to look after the rest of the floor, where the cases were lighter. That meant three big wards with eighteen men each, and three small wards with four men each, and several orderly rooms and doctors' offices. I started to clean up as well as I could with the help of the orderlies. Some of the beds had not been changed for a week and the men who were too sick to get out of bed had not been washed. I tried to find which men were sickest and take their temperatures and wash them, and see that the orderlies gave hand basins to the other men to at least wash their hands and faces. It was hard work and harder still to keep one's head and not waste time on needless things.

At five o'clock in the afternoon an orderly told me to go to the doctor's office. I went, wondering what dreadful thing I had done or not done and knocked at his door. Three young men were sitting there and continued to sit and look me over till one, who, I supposed was the C. O., told me to go back to my room and rest for two hours and report for night duty in the pneumonia ward at eight o'clock. I protested, just as I had at Beauvais, that I was not a nurse and had never seen but one

case of pneumonia in my life and that it was not fair to the men, and was told once more that I was better than no one and that the real nurses could not be spared for night duty. I was to be the only woman in the building that night. With desperate misgivings I went back to my dismal room and tried to take comfort from that certainly temperate assurance that I was better than no one.

Seven o'clock came all too soon, when I must go for supper, which was served to us with the French nurses in a square one-room building in the center of the group. It was harder than usual to get down the inevitable boiled beans and potato and at eight o'clock I reluctantly approached the barrack. It was unlighted and its bare mass looked forbidding. In the entrance hall I met a boy who said he was in my service and lighted me up the black stairway with an electric torch. As we went up, I became conscious of a troubling sound which as we reached the top gathered into a strange broken, barking, confused noise. My startled thought was, "It is some kind of animal. What is it doing here?" Then suddenly I knew it was made by men—the mingled sound of gasping and coughing and delirium. As we went down the passageway leading to the door the air became heavy and foul. Sanitary buckets were waiting in a row to be carried away and I remembered sickeningly that I had found in the afternoon that there was only one faucet of cold water for the whole floor, and no place to empty anything. The room was lighted by a dim kerosene lantern placed on a board table in the center of the

room. The beds were put all around the walls between the windows with their feet towards the center. Thank God, there were six windows, all open. A small stove in the middle tempered the air.

A white-faced unshaven doctor, who looked tired and harassed, met me and went over the lists of medicines to be given during the night and left with orders that he was not to be called, no matter what happened. I saw him go with a sinking heart and turned to my two orderlies. They looked like high school boys. It was obvious that I must close my ears to the bedlam of sound and my eyes to the forms in the beds until I had first of all made some sense out of the orders left on the table. I sat down to make a schedule — a list of what medicines must be given every hour and to whom. A poor youngster only eighteen was sitting hunched up on his bed in a corner with an army blanket about his shoulders. He began to call, "Rosy, Rosy, I want you." I went to him and he seized my hand and began to kiss my hand and my arm over and over. At that moment the C. O. came in with a Major who was in consultation. The Major had evidently heartened himself before making rounds and the sight of the poor boy's delirious kisses brought to his face a sickening look of foolish sentimentality. It was a relief to turn away to the next bed. After spending a precious half hour he went out without having changed an order, except to give instructions to give strychnine and digitalis to any man who seemed to need it at my own discretion, an

order I later regretted having taken seriously, when I was scolded by a doctor in charge of another ward for dosing one of his patients without his having told me to. I returned to the interrupted task of planning the night and giving medicine and hypodermics. The orderly was gentle and tactful with the men. His clear young face, so unlined by life, was lighted from within as he went about his dreadful task of emptying buckets and sputum cups, almost with an air of lightheartedness. His was the hardest part of the nursing. Of the sixteen men in the ward twelve were delirious. Several kept trying to get out of bed; some shouted and cursed and some muttered and babbled or repeated a phrase over and over, till its rhythm became an insistent undertone to all the other noises.

About midnight a man died. The orderlies came to carry him away, but I begged them to wait till his body was cold. They looked at me forbearingly with the knowledge in their eyes of other nights, and before morning I realized why — there was not time to wait and someone else needed the bed.

A few minutes later a dazed boy, partly delirious, came wandering in from another ward and I put him in an empty bed. The young boy, who sat crouched on his bed all night, kept calling for "Rosy" and would not be quiet till I came. When I gave him a hypodermic he cried peevishly, "Ma, take Sis away, she bothers me."

In the middle of the night an orderly brought me a tin plate of boiled beans and a cup of coffee, which I ate at the center table. Two more men

died and were carried out. Death haunted the room and in the moment of turning one's back, it seemed snatched a soul from its body. Dawn came at last. Its cold light revealed unshaven haggard young faces. In the dark it had seemed like a dim, confused nightmare from which one must awake, but in the merciless clearness of daylight delirium and glazed eyes had to be accepted as reality. In the last hour of complete light relief and despair joined hands.

I turned from trying to fasten a blanket for a last time about the shoulders of Rosy to find Peg, who had come to see how I had got on before herself going on duty. It was like touching shore when you had begun to wonder if you could swim any further. I walked out in a daze into the cold gray morning and over to the dining-room and swallowed a bowl of coffee before falling into bed.

It was only the first of a confused succession of black nights and gray days—a cold hour in the morning, then blessed sleep, then another cold hour of walking, a hurried supper and night again.

* * *

Without the help of the orderlies it would have been impossible to go on. Many of them were boys who had enlisted with romantic ideas of driving ambulances and carrying the wounded from the field of battle, and they accepted their far harder task of filthy and gruesome work with courage and gentleness and self sacrifice. Their eager help and their confidence in what I could do made me bound not to let them down more than I could

help. They were funny, too. Sometimes in the midst of everything I would laugh right out.

It was not till after several nights had passed that I discovered that the French management issued no night meals for nurses and that every night the orderlies had shared their own rations with me. One night a Jewish boy came on duty and brought me the usual plate of boiled beef, but dissatisfied with that he explained, "We boys sure would feel bad, girly, if any of you nurses got in the morgue. You gotter take care of yourself—how about a cup o' chocolate at two and a cup o' hot coffee at four?" and sure enough he appeared with them and I had to stop to take them. One night a fat fellow who had been a railroad engineer made a great point of asking me to come to the orderly room for supper and getting the nurse from upstairs to come too. It seemed to be almost a party. It was such a respite to leave the ward for ten minutes and sit in the light where it was warm while eating that after that I did it every night. It was easier to work afterwards for a moment's shutting the door on Death.

It was the same fat boy who the first night had championed me. One of the orderlies said, "Gee, I wouldn't want to have my sister here." "No," chimed in another, "I bet this is the time the little old school house would look good to you." "It ain't the school house," indignantly interrupted the fat one, "it's the ribbon counter." Alas, one night he felt badly and kept his courage up with whiskey. It would be confusion worse confounded to leave deli-

rious men in the care of a drunken man and I knocked at the doctor's office to report it. The doctor seemed to think it a great joke but did send another man. Two hours later I found the fat one sitting in a heap on a chair sobered by fright. He said he was shivery so I took his temperature and found he had fever and sent him to barracks. He was put in another ward and I never saw him again.

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The second night Rosy sat straight up in bed and said the Lord's Prayer from beginning to end, then whimpered and trailed off into feeble curses and asked for a glass of beer, then died. A big fellow who looked like a Southern mountaineer in a bed facing the table where I worked, called "Mother, Mother" and when I went he took my hand and looked up at me happily and said, "I saw yer smilin', Ma," and died. The little Irish barber who had fought courageously, got almost well and had a relapse and died. A fine looking boy by the window, who was not delirious and who seemed only humbly concerned not to be a bother, died smiling as though saying, "You must not feel badly." A man with a bad face began dreadfully to curse, saying the same thing over and over and over again. He struggled to get out of bed. The doctor came in and I helped him tie the man's hands and feet to the ends of the bed and fasten a sheet tight over his body and tie it under the bed. Then the doctor began to put a gag in his mouth. I asked him not to do it on my account but he said it bothered the

other men and kept on. When he left some one took it out. He had a theory that a man who could not move became more tranquil and asked me the next night if it did not work. It had perfectly — at the end of an hour the monotonous curse had become fainter and fainter till it had trailed off to silence and the man was quiet forever.

* * *

In those weeks I grew to love a quality of spirit that belongs to humble people, an acceptance of hard things and a feeling that what happens to them is not very important. Men died in a sort of heroic humility, facing that last moment alone without expecting any more fuss to be made over their deaths than had been made over their lives.

The sense of it was strengthened when one night a captain and a young lieutenant were brought into one of the small rooms. The captain was a soft, common man with the vulgarity that comes when a man has been given a social position which he has not the character and training to fill. He was in a blue fright because a doctor had scared him about his heart. He had a light case of flu. He was put out because I did not sit down and talk to him; he wanted this and he wanted that. Finally I got away and set about the night's work. At midnight, while I was eating supper in the orderly room the young lieutenant appeared in the door in his pyjamas and said the captain wanted me. Finding me sitting in the light talking to the orderlies he evidently thought that was the way I spent the night. The poor fellow had stumbled into another

small room where the dead were left on the floor. I sympathized, for hardened as I had become to dreadful nights, it had been a shock one night to open a door and see three figures wrapped in grave clothes on the floor looking like white Egyptian mummies with the strange majesty and mystery of the dead showing even through the wrappings. I followed the boy back and found the captain in a fright. He could not sleep and had a stomachache. His pulse was normal and he had very little fever. It was with a reluctant and protesting heart that I went to the doctor whom I had not been allowed to call for my dying boys. He told me to give him veronal in a glass of milk which sent him off to sleep, thank goodness, for the rest of the night. The next night he had a special nurse.

* * *

At night I was the only nurse on the floor and by degrees the orderlies began coming to me to help them with men in the other wards. It was no longer possible to put the sickest men in one ward — there were dying men everywhere. It was strange that a woman's voice would penetrate delirium and that men who had been quite unmanageable would become docile. One night an orderly called me and going with him I found two others holding a giant red haired Swede. I went up to take his hand and the orderly said quickly, "Don't touch him, he'll knock you down." "No, I'm sure he won't." I took him by the hand and he stood quiet a moment. "Son, I want you to get back into

bed." He looked puzzled a bit, mumbled something and climbed quietly back.

Only once it failed. I leaned over a big tough-looking Southerner. In the dim light he thought I was a young girl "Hello, girl," he said, "who are you? I like you. I like you better than any girl I've seen. I'd like to go to town with a God-damned girl like you and have a Hell of a time!" I laughed and the orderly looked scandalized. Then I poured out some bitter medicine in a big iron spoon and gave it to him. He was furious and seized the spoon and tried to hit me with it. I could not get it away and had to leave him his weapon and keep out of striking distance. Later, I foolishly tried to give him medicine again and he seized me by both hands and drew me down. I called to the orderly who was just going out of the door. He wrenched my hands free roughly and turned to me indignantly. "Say, nurse, when any feller gets fresh like that you ought to sock him under the jaw." He was puzzled when I laughed. He helped me to tie him in bed. The poor man died the next morning.

Three delirious men had tried to jump out of the window and one poor fellow succeeded and broke his leg. He recovered from the flu and his leg was doing well when he developed tetanus and died horribly.

One night an orderly came and asked what he should do for a man who was screaming. I followed and found a black-haired boy with frightened eyes who began to scream again when he saw me. It was a dreadful sound. His temperature and

pulse were almost normal. The orderly said "I think he's just scared." We concocted a powder of a ground up malted milk tablet and gave it to him telling him it would put him to sleep. He took it and was quiet in the snap of a finger.

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All of these things happened in bare dark barrack rooms,—the blackness of the walls broken only by the paler squares of open windows. The half seen beds were, one after another, lighted for a moment by the flash of an electric torch or a lantern turned upon a face flushed or deadly white, or, worst of all, a dull bluish color; upon moving lips and blank eyes whose gaze was turned inwards upon some other scene. Here and there a personality would emerge—some incident, or words, or needed service would establish a human connection, especially with the sickest men, the dying men, but many, many remained unconscious sleeping forms under the bed clothes, protected by some fortunate chance from the snatching fingers of Death—Death who night after night seemed an actual presence in the room, a stirring in the troubled air of majesty and terror.

* * *

After a timeless period, actually only eighteen nights, the head nurse, Miss Smith, asked me if I would like to go on day duty. My mind jumped to working with doctors and under a trained nurse who would teach me to do the right things for my men, and end the nightmare of meeting nightly responsibility for life and death with ignorance and

impotent untrained effort. I said, "Yes" and wept when Miss Smith ordered me to report on the convalescent wards downstairs and would not let me go back even to my night duty again. My ward was given over to Emily Cross, who had come that same day.

The very next day I felt shivery and miserable and crawled into bed, crawled into my thick blue steamer rug which I put inside the damp sheets. At noon Peg and Emily, who had joined us in our peasant's house, brought me a cup of soup and a plate of cold boiled beans and then had to run to get back to duty on time. With sterno on the table beside me I heated the soup but the beans were too much and there the pallid mess stayed among the hair brushes and combs till Peg brought another plate when she came back from supper. Every time I fell asleep I dreamed of haggard, unshaven faces, just a succession of them, one after another, and when I was awake I was tormented by the thought of the wrong things I had probably done, and almost worse of the lives that perhaps could have been saved if I had not been ignorant and inexperienced. Once a day the old woman came up and emptied the slops out of the window and left again. After two days I was able to go out again and we were ordered to move into a wooden barrack which had been put up for the nurses—for it was only the first few nights that there were only five of us. It was a relief to leave that squalid spot and find ourselves, all three, in a large newly whitewashed room with two win-

dows. We were surprised to find that our living with the old woman had been looked upon as a special privilege by the other nurses. No sooner had we moved in than poor Emily caught the pest and had her dreary turn at cold oatmeal and cold boiled beans left beside her in a tin plate for the day. We would come home and find Johnson, a pink-cheeked youngster of eighteen, who had been detailed as nurses' chambermaid, sitting on a chair at the head of her bed telling her about his high school societies.

* * *

Going back to work I found that I had been put in charge of a small room with six men who had been gassed and had flu, and a large room with some fifteen men, most of whom were out of bed. In another building nearby were two large rooms with about thirty men each, only a few of whom were seriously sick. The gassed men were pitiful. The windows in their room were painted blue because their eyes were weak and the ghastly light did not help the flu depression. I used to try to cook them extra things over a can of sterno for the pleasure of eating seemed the only one left them, but eggs and time were hard to find. There was a big handsome Irishman named Murphy in one corner. His mother had been cook in Philadelphia in the family of a Red Cross canteen woman who had been helping us as nurse. This woman would burst into the room and throw her arms about him and turn appealingly to the rest of the room, unconscious of the rather sickly expressions that met

hers. Next to Murphy was a poor Pole who was dying. His foreignness seemed to shut him off from sympathy and there was only an ashamed relief in the room when death ended his groans and gasps.

It was always a relief to go out to the big room of convalescents, mostly lively, friendly boys, chaffing each other and laughing. Many of them had not had the flu and were there for minor ailments. There were only odds and ends of things to do for them, ears to be irrigated, a few cuts to be tied up and so on. It was the most cheerful room of all my hospital experience.

My hopes of working under a doctor's careful orders were somewhat blighted. I was in the service of a glossy Jew with a waxed moustache and a beautifully fitting uniform who called me "Miss Sheeny." I think he was afraid of the flu — anyway he came to the wards as little, and for as short a time, as possible and seldom touched any of the men. At the end of about a week the two big rooms outside were ordered evacuated. Since it was not possible for one nurse to do both the nursing and the paper work for ninety men, I had done the nursing and let the papers go only keeping temperatures for the few really sick ones, so that no proper charts were made out. This did not suit the doctor who thought it would not reflect to his credit, so he said, "Now, Miss Sheeney, just make out a chart for each of the men like this — a pulse going about so, and respiration and temperature about so," illustrating up and down zig zags on the

chart as he spoke. I had learned a tiny amount of discretion and said nothing but fortunately the C. O. came in a few moments later and I innocently showed him the chart and said the doctor had told me to make them for all the other men as soon as I got time. He looked at it and said dryly that it could wait.

The two sickest men were ordered to another ward. That very day one of them turned blue and was heavily unconscious. His bed was by the stove and as the orderly and I worked over him a group of men gathered about the stove and chatted as though in a country store and watched us with a sort of dispassionate curiosity. He died that night.

I was ordered to report the next morning at the evacuation shed, a great barn of a place near the gate with side sliding doors—I suppose where the gun carriages had been kept. The floor was covered with stretchers and the walking cases came crowding in, more of them every minute. A distracted Frenchman sat at a little table by the door making out papers. The train was supposed to go at 10 and at 12:30 there was still no sign of moving. The men were restless and hungry and tired. A troubled orderly pointed out a man who was evidently exhausted and said he was marked to sit up for the whole journey. I asked the Frenchman if his paper could be changed and he impatiently put a red mark instead of a blue one. Fortunately I had a red and blue pencil tied to my belt for making charts and I asked him if I might change those who

needed it. To be rid of me he said "Yes" so the orderlies found some stretchers and we fixed up some poor fellows who were on the point of fainting. I only hoped it didn't mean that someone still sicker sat up. The chances are that no attention was paid to the papers when they got to the train anyway and that each took what he could get. At one end of the shed there was a dump of discarded stuff, probably what had belonged to men who had died. We began to steal blankets from it for those who were cold and to make pillows of others. One soon learned to be a thief in army nursing. One poor chap had his head on a pair of army boots. Some of the men from my old ward were brought in.

At last it was evident that nothing was going to happen before dinner time and pots of chocolate and of boiled rice were brought in, but no plates or spoons. The rice had to be put into the cups and eaten by hand and there were not enough cups even. At the long last when everyone's strength and patience were exhausted the ambulances drew up and the men were loaded in—to go probably to some wretched convalescent camp.

I found myself left with only the convalescent ward to look after and a chance to help another aide in a ward where one of my sick men from outside had been moved. He, poor fellow, had an exaggerated gratitude for the very little I had been able to do for him and was sure I had saved his life. He showed me a kodak of his mother who looked like a peasant woman with a heavy figure

and deeply lined face, and said she was the only best girl he had ever had.

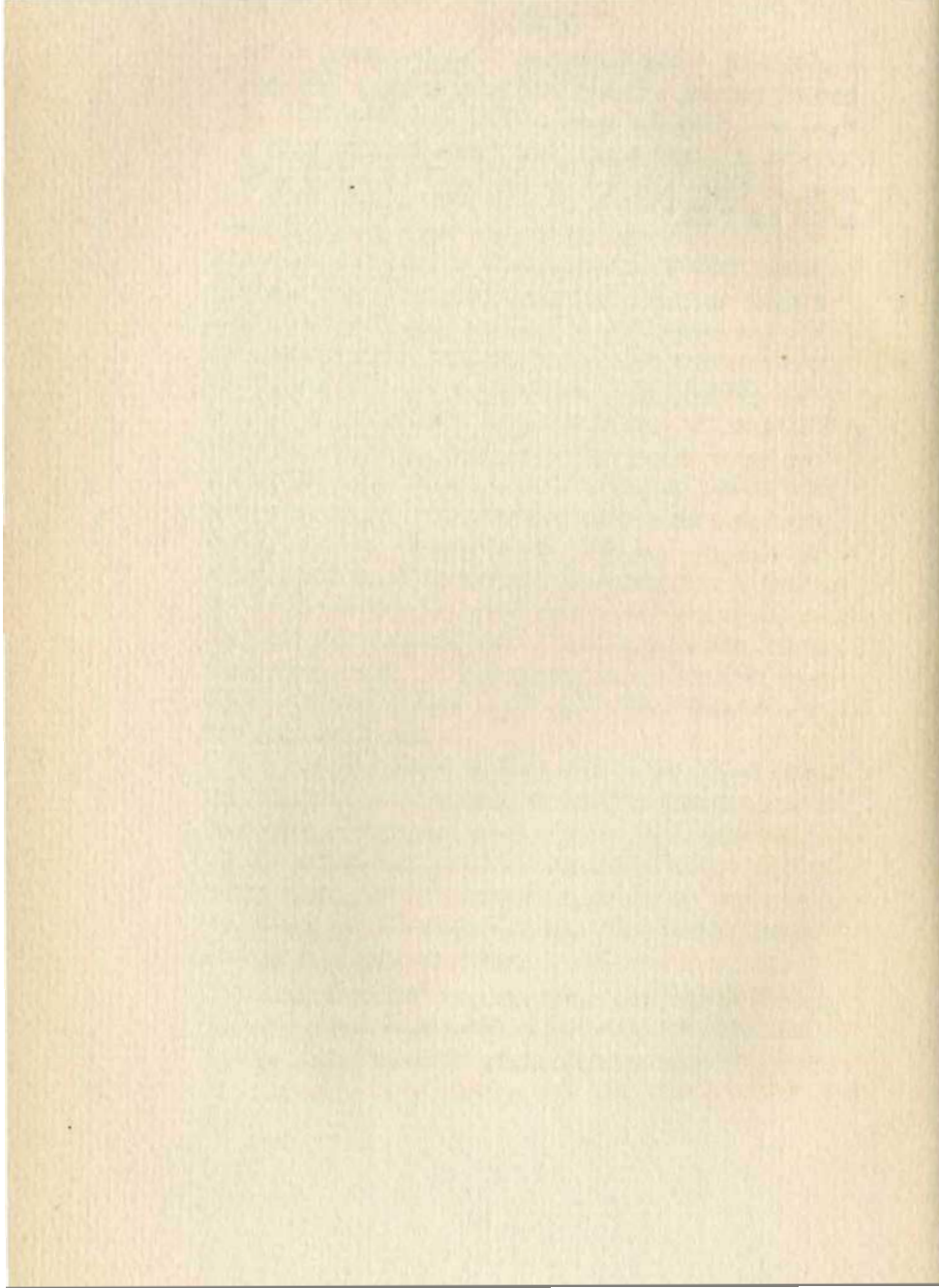
* * *

All this time poor Emily had been in bed and a few days later I was ordered to go back to Paris with her, and some trained nurses who had also been sick. I could not bear to go and the head nurse said she would be glad to have me stay, so I gathered courage to beg the C. O. not to send me. He was monosyllabic and unmoved. No one was sent to the station with us and we would hardly have got off if doughboys had not helped us with the sick nurses' bags, even hanging to the steps and piling them on after the train began to move. We sat up all night in the compartment with two other aides and a distinguished looking gray-haired French officer. One of the aides pointed to a medal on his breast and in good American-French asked, "Qu'est que c'est que ça?" "La Medaille de Sainte Catherine, Mlle." "Qu'est que vous avez fait avec Sainte Catherine pour avoir ça?" The officer threw up both his hands.

We reached Paris at last and as we drove into the Place de la Concorde we suddenly came upon hundreds of captured guns, big ones and little ones, all about the Place and arranged in clusters under every light post and stretching as far as we could see down the Champs Elysées. Our hearts turned over at this sight of victory.

We went to bed as soon as we reached the hotel and it seemed impossible to be lying in a luxurious bed in a gray panelled room with an open fire, and

a glistening white bathroom with hot water to be had for turning a faucet, and to be eating a delicious meal served by the most correct and deferential of servants in a tail coat—but I was happier with a plate of beans slapped on the table by a boy who called me “Sis.”



VILLERS COTTERETS

ABOUT two weeks later, on November 7th, a note came from Miss Fitzgerald, the head of the nurses' aide service, asking me to report for duty. I went immediately and found I was to be sent to Villers Cotterets with a pleasant looking Irish girl who had been nursing in hospitals in England and had never been sent out of Paris before. Miss Fitzgerald gave us tickets for a train leaving at seven the next morning. I rose early and met Miss Bartley at the Gare du Nord. After waiting in line an hour in a pushing crowd we found there was no train. There was only one train a day and it had gone an hour before. Discouraged we went back and reported and then reengaged the room I had just given up and arranged with the concierge to get us a taxi at 4:30 the next morning. It was pitch dark when we started and once more we spent an hour at the Gare du Nord waiting to have our papers examined.

When we reached Villers Cotterets it was pouring and cold and there was no one to meet us. We found the usual old man to take our bags in a wheel-barrow and slopped through the mud after him through battered empty streets till we came to a big gray building directly on the street, and entered through an arch into a large court, with grass and two rows of plane trees down its length. No one seemed to know anything about us and we were shown into a cold dreary office to wait for the

Médecin Chef. At the end of about an hour he came in looking mildly surprised to see us. "Yes, it was true, some two or three weeks ago something had been said about nurses for the Americans, but now they had all left — ah, no, there were, he believed, a few left, perhaps two officers and a few men. Yes, certainly, Americans — negroes." I hardly dared look at Miss Bartley.

A nurse took us upstairs to our room and my heart lightened as we entered. It had gray panelled walls and a double casement window and an open fire and some one had left a vase of orange berries on the mantel-piece. The walls were dirty and there were only two iron beds and two kitchen chairs, and the glass was all gone from the window and brown paper had been pasted in instead, but still there was an air of lingering graciousness, and we were to have it to ourselves. We found that the building was originally a chateau built by François Ier, which had of late years fallen to being used as an old people's home. When the town was bombarded and the old people had been sent away it had been taken as a military hospital.

Someone came to take us to supper in a nearby room and there too was an open fire. In one half of the room was a smaller table with a different set of nurses evidently, as at Beauvais, socially superior to us. They were commanded by a sour-faced old woman and there was no interchange of greetings. After supper Miss Bartley and I drew our capes about us and sat over the fire, writing home by candlelight, and wondering what the

morning would bring. Would American negroes be any different from French and how about those two negro officers?

After breakfast Mlle. Lalot came to escort us to the ward where we were to serve under her. She was a frail, nervous slip of a girl with transparent skin and blue circles under her eyes. She led us across the court and up an arched stone stairway, with bits of old carving left from grander days, and pushed open a large door. We felt in our faces a gust of warm, moist, heavy air — and it was not only to be felt. We looked into a room flooded with light from high windows on both sides, windows which we soon discovered were nailed down tight, and with four rows of cots, and a stove in the middle. A boy was sluicing down the stone floor with a pail of water. At the opposite end were four steps leading up to another door. We walked the length of the room under the gaze of forty-five pair of eyes and mounted the steps and went down a short, dark corridor to a room beyond where there were half a dozen cots. There at last was the American officer we had come to care for — a head of crinkly black hair above a grayish brown face, peering at us anxiously over the top of a sheet. At his childlike smile all fears vanished. He was almost well and there was little to do for him. The other officer had left the day before. In the next room was a tall spare darkie with a disagreeable morose face who was sitting dressed on the edge of his bed and did not move when we came in, or appear the

least interested to see us. We were not sorry to find that he was to leave the next day.

Having found our Americans, we went back to the ward and fell to on our real task of nursing forty-five poilus. The little nurse had been struggling alone so there was plenty to do. The men all had influenza but there were only a few who were dangerously sick. The doctor soon came in followed by a sergeant with an enormous black book, in which he wrote the doctor's orders, and what medicine and treatment each man was to have. Miss Bartley spoke no French and Mlle. Lalot ran helter skelter from one bed to another, so in despair, after the doctor left I sought out the sergeant and his black book in a back office, and copied out lists of what was to be done, and presented it to Miss Bartley to decide what she would do herself, and what she wanted me to do. After that each morning I made out a schedule and we spent the day in carrying it out.

Two days after we came our darkie officer got himself transferred to a French ward where he was evidently more at ease than being cared for by American white women. I felt ashamed that it should be so. The French considered him decidedly "Chic," "Tout a fait charmant — mais charmant," they assured us. Is it to be wondered at he wished to be transferred?

* * *

Three days after we arrived there was a report that the Armistice had been signed. Poilus began singing in the street and at the cinema opposite.

There was rather a sense of suspense when we met the nurses at supper instead of the uncontrolled joy and excitement I had expected. The restraint of four years could not be broken in a moment. Perhaps to those women who for four years had dwelt with suffering and death there came an overwhelming memory of tragedies. The thought of troops returning to them must have meant the thought of those who would not return, and of the countless number they had nursed who must face life maimed. It was hard to tell what depth of feeling there was beneath their outward calm.

The next day when we came on duty we found that two men were dying. One of them, a simple fellow with the look of a country man, had been put in one of the small rooms that was empty. He died that afternoon with only me, a stranger, and the German orderly with him. In his eyes was that dumb trusting look that had become so sadly familiar and was so hard to meet, that seemed to say, "I know you will not let me die." That afternoon I came unexpectedly into the passageway, and almost stumbled over a soldier kneeling on the floor, pressing his knee against a bundle wrapped in burlap and pulling a rope tight about it. I suddenly realized it was a man's body. A few hours later another died in the big ward. These two deaths seemed the most bitter of all, coming at the very moment when their families must have been rejoicing that they were safe at last.

The next day the signing of the Armistice was confirmed. Could one believe that the war was

really ended? No, it was impossible. Perhaps some day it might be true, but not suddenly — that very moment. Soldiers sang in the streets again and church bells rang, but there was no wild joy. It was as though people had laid down a great burden and must draw breath and rest.

In the afternoon we had a fête in our ward. Mlle. Lalot and I had made an excursion the night before through the ruined streets to a house where we had found a few flowers and branches of laurel, and had bought some cookies and little flags and champagne. We had left the preparations on a table in the ward while we went to lunch and when we came back we found that the men had decorated while we were gone. Someone had written in large notes the bars of "Le jour de gloire est arrive" and framed it in laurel and placed above it a French and an American flag crossed. We poured the champagne into tin cups and all drank toasts together. The sergeant got a little tipsy and with his képi aslant stood on the top steps and sang grand opera in a tenor voice with dramatic gestures. The big room seemed stirring with the struggle to cast off the burden laid on hearts by four years of misery and to face the incredible dazzling thought of a world at peace. As I went down the line of beds to say good-night a gray-haired man whom we called "Le Père" said with tears of happiness in his eyes, "Now I can hope to see my son again" — but at the end of the line I leaned over to speak to a man who during it all had lain with his face turned

away, and he answered "Ah, my two sons are killed. Death doesn't want me."

Little Mlle. Lalot was a shadow of a woman. Her fiancé has been killed and her father had lost his money. She had been nursing all during the war and told me she had lost thirty pounds. When we came she was alone in a ward with about forty-five men and had reached the end of what she could do. I had a suspicion that she was keeping going with some sort of drug. The doctor was a turbulent person, large, dark and rather good looking with a turned-up waxed moustache and a fiery temper. In the morning he would listen to the men's lungs. If a door creaked or someone coughed he would straighten up and stamp his foot and shout, "Un peu de silence!" An uncouth old orderly would start to cross the room in squeaking cowhide boots carrying an object that was being frantically beckoned for from the end of the ward. He would tiptoe heavily a few steps, then stand stock still rolling his eyes in fright at the doctor, his shock of black hair standing out in startled tufts, and trying to appease the impatient one by holding out the object with hopeful winks and gestures.

Some of the orderlies were German prisoners. The bit I remembered of school-time German was useful though there were many things I would have liked to know the names of that Goethe and Schiller never mentioned. I found myself unwillingly liking our three Fritzies—they were simple, kind boys and very decent to the sick men. I must confess that one Fritz was worth three of the old

French codger. The men were good to them too. I did not hear a single taunt or unkind word. On the day that news came of the flight of the Kaiser and the Crown Prince I said something to one of the boys about it and he answered, "Oh, Fraulein, we love him, he has been so good to us." What could one say? In the morning as I lay in bed and heard the heavy tramp of the German prisoners go past I shivered to think what the sound of their marching feet had meant for four years.

One day I asked the Mèdecin Chef, since our darkies were gone, if we might have four Canadians and one Englishman who were in the hospital moved to our ward. Later, I felt I had done the unkindest thing, for one of the Canadians who had been curiously red for two days was pronounced to have scarlet fever. After three hours he was put in one of the small rooms with a man who had erysipelas, but we had to go in and out with only a hand washing between, and they did not bother to have Fritz do even that, till I told him to come to me whenever he came out. Surprisingly they were both sent on to a contagious hospital in the afternoon. Then orders were given that everything was to be disinfected and that all the men who were up and dressed must go back to bed and make bundles of their clothes. They put the bundles under their beds — and there they stayed till they all got up the next morning and put them on again.

The Englishman was out of bed and wandered about the ward dressed in the flannel lining of his trench coat over his pyjamas. He was a odd figure,

and yet he somehow managed to give the impression that it was his ward and that all the rest of us were there on sufferance.

When there were no very sick men we were able to walk in the forest. There were beautiful open beech woods with silvery gray trunks and a carpet of russet autumn leaves and glossy holly bushes. Leading from the front of the château was a wide avenue cut through the forest in the days of François *I*ier. We wandered down one of the side alleys one day and came upon an American Red Cross ambulance that had foundered in the mud. On it was a bronze plate marked "Portland, Oregon, Genevieve Thompson"—a long jump from the pleasure forest of François *I*ier to Genevieve Thompson. On our walks we gathered wood for our evening fire. The November air began to be very chill. In the morning I did just as little washing as I had always suspected that I would do under the circumstances, but at night with a fire and a little saucepan of hot water I gathered courage.

The men's confidence in us was weakened by our unaccountable liking for fresh air and water both internally and externally. One morning I handed a man a swallow of water in his cup to take a pill. He looked at it and put the cup down and eyed me coldly:

"What, Mademoiselle, is that?"

"Water."

"Nothing but water?"

"Yes."

"Just ordinary water?"

"Yes."

"But, Mademoiselle, do you not know that water chills the stomach?"

I got a cup of hot tea.

Our men were ordered evacuated — all but four, and we were recalled. The day before leaving I went through the town and found a few jars of marmalade and some cakes for a farewell treat for the men. There was a great change in the town even in the short time since our arrival; each day more people had come back. They had shoveled the rubbish out into the street and put tar paper over the roof and hung out a little cambric flag over the door, and started life again. Before we left one could buy champagne, perfumery and flowers — the essentials of life!

Thoughts began for the first time to turn towards home. I wondered if this were the end of nursing.

STRASBOURG

WHEN I came back from Villers Cotterets I found that Peg had been sent to Laon to a canteen for prisoners returning from Germany. I went to the Red Cross headquarters, which had been moved to the Hotel Regina, to ask if I could join her and found the great building swarming with men and women in the uniforms of every branch of the services, nurses, aides, canteen workers, secretaries, relief workers, all of us out of jobs and all asking for new ones, and not liking those offered us. I wanted to go to Laon and couldn't get there, wanted to know if we could both go to Germany and couldn't find out, was told I could have a cheer-up-the-boys job at a southern canteen and didn't want it; we were still an unchastened lot and few of us had learned that hardest lesson of all—waiting.

At the end of three restless weeks of finding that the bottom had dropped out of life and that Peace did not mean a world turned suddenly happy and self forgetful a chance came, December 12, to go to Strasbourg to nurse sick or wounded men returning from German prisons. I was delighted to find that Emily Cross and Miss Baxter were going too. Four other women went also.

It was a sitting up all night trip. The next morning when we reported to the Médecin Chef to whom we were directed, we were told there were no American prisoners in the hospitals and it was

not known whether there would be any. The four other women returned the next day. For three weeks Miss Baxter, Emily and I explored Strasbourg, under a gray rainy sky. The sun came out for just two hours. We went through every alley of the old town with its canals and timbered houses that always reeked of sauerkraut; we walked endlessly through the ugly new German town with its hideous brick Kaiser's palace and endless heavy government buildings; we went to the French movies in the Place Kléber where there was a shabby house full to the brim of poilus, the air almost as blue with smoke as their uniforms, and there, for the first time, saw Charlie Chaplin, the beloved "Charlot" and Bill Hart with French captions; we went to the German movies in a large ornate theater that was almost empty with only a scattering of civilians and saw gross comics — and every day we watched with intense satisfaction workmen taking down and painting out German shop signs and putting up French ones.

Emily took me to call upon the mother of a nun who had been in the colony of children that had been under her care. The old woman had lived in Strasbourg for fifty years and spoke with tears of the joy of speaking and reading French openly without fear of arrest. She was mortified and apologetic when a German word slipped out or she could not think at once of the French word she wanted.

I spent many hours in the great Cathedral watching the pictures made by shifting groups.

During Christmas week a naïve model of the town of Bethlehem with the Christ Child in a stable was built against a massive stone pillar. Children played about it in the dusky light, in and out of the rich color patterned on the stone floor by the old glass windows.

We found one day that there was a boy from New Haven in one of the hospitals. In a curiously impassive way he told us, "I was never so mad in my life as on the 22nd of July. I was with my brother and we were both company runners and we crossed a field that seemed to be empty all right three times, and the fourth time a Jerry came up out of a shell hole and held up one hand and called "Kamerad!" I put my gun on him and told him to hold up the other hand, but before I could get him he threw one of these hand grenades and it landed right beside my brother and took his foot off. I killed him and picked up my brother and carried him back towards the dressing station. He asked me to put him down and get him a drink, so I propped him against a wall and went to a spring that was right near, and while I was coming back another Jerry looked over the top of the wall and shot him." But for a twist of his lip you would not have known what he felt.

On Christmas morning we visited him and a major, who had once been in Troop A in Hartford, and took them little Christmas trees. In the afternoon we went to one of the French hospitals and helped distribute cigarettes in the wards. The Médecin Chef asked us to come back and talked vaguely

of our helping for two hours in the morning and two in the afternoon. He dwelt a good deal upon the poor returned prisoner needing simply to talk with a woman, to have someone open or shut a window, or give him something to drink. We went the next morning and followed him about while he made rounds. When that was over, according to the often repeated instructions, I popped into a room to talk to a man. He only spoke patois and did not understand a word I said. I made out that he wished to sleep. I left him and went into the next room and said brightly "Would you like the window open a moment?" "Oh, no, Mademoiselle, that would make a 'courant d'air'." Still faithful, at the next room I asked rather falteringly, "Would you like a drink of something?" "Oh, Mademoiselle"—from the *infirmier*,—"I have here some wine and am about to serve them all hot soup in a moment." I gave up and went home. At last came the telegram recalling us and the very same day the American prisoners arrived. Of course we stayed. There was some difficulty about admitting us as nurses and, as the men were to be there only two days, it was doubtless wiser not, but at least it was a satisfaction to be there and talk to them and do errands for them. There was no doubt that they were glad to see American women. One man was from Willimantic. Most of them had been fairly well treated and were not starved. Their wounds had been badly cared for, but I suppose it could hardly be expected that good doctors would be assigned to prison camps. A number of their packs

were full of queer looking hard bread and they explained that the Serbians in the camp were so grateful for American relief during the war that they had made them presents of part of the food sent them from Serbia and, moreover, had taken up a contribution of 400 marks to help them on the way. It took us most of the day being sent from one office to another to get the marks changed into francs for them. It was one of those times when to be "an-honest-to-God American woman" was all that was asked of us and even that made it seem worth while to have waited.

We saw the men leave and then got the train for Paris. The train was jammed full; we spent the night with eleven in a compartment meant for six. Men slept packed on the floor of the corridor. One had to step over them to reach the retreat at the end and when finally reached, four soldiers squeezed out saying gallantly, "place aux dames."

JOY RIDING

BY January it was evident that we would not be sent out any more. Like all Americans who had been behind the lines we wanted to see the front before going home, and asked Dr. Burlingame if it would be possible. He was good to us and got Emily, Peg and me papers for a "special mission" to Verdun and Rheims by train or automobile. January 14th we each put some chocolate and rolls and a tooth brush into our purses and took a train from Paris to St. Menchould, passing through Château Thierry and Dormans where our men had fought the summer before. We reached St. Menchould after dark and splashed through mud and rain to the hotel. Peg and I slept in an icy bed together with our clothes on and still shivered. The hours were shortened by the singing of a poilu the other side of the partition, who hummed soldier songs in a sweet tenor voice. We got up at four and it was still pouring as we made our way back to the station. With the help of a kind M. P. we found our train away down the track and climbed into a pitch black third class carriage full of soldiers returning from leave. We jolted and bumped along, and stopped, and started again. The men were talking together telling stories of the German occupation. As we started after an especially long wait, they all exclaimed "Déjà!" One of them climbed on the roof of the car and a man below called up, "Qu'est-ce que tu fais là-haut; t'es le bon Dieu?"

We finally seemed to have stopped for good. We were near the road and saw several American trucks pass. It suddenly occurred to us that here was a chance and we jumped from the car and hailed the next truck. There were three American soldiers and a "Y" man in it. At the first house we came to the "Y" man, called "Happy," insisted on getting us a bench to sit on and some candy. The truck lurched along and we were thrown from side to side. The bench was a snare for it promptly tipped us over backwards. At length we came to Verdun. Gray against a gray sky, the ragged lines of wall mounted the hills. The streets that had been cleared wound between heaped up piles of broken masonry and houses smashed and yawning. The Cathedral was open to the sky with a few massive pillars and arches left standing. What the guns left the soldiers had finished. In their passion for souvenirs they even chipped marble from the altars and destroyed carvings. It stood despoiled and desolate.

We first visited the citadel, a great underground labyrinth, with tunnel after tunnel, which could house thousands of men. There was every kind of necessary activity—kitchens, laundries, sleeping barracks, telephone offices and railroads. It seemed the home of some new cave dwelling man living in dark and ugliness. There was even a chapel furnished from what had been saved from the Cathedral above. What desperate prayers must have been said there. This great underground fortress, untouched in the midst of a waste of desolation, and entered through a forbidding battlemented gateway,

expressed the whole grim determination of "ils ne passeront pas."

We dined at the "Y" hut, a house a little less smashed than most and patched up to be weather proof, and then went out to try our fortune. It was raining hard and there was no place to spend the night so we reluctantly gave up going to the battle-field and the forts outside. We began asking for lifts and were turned down by a captain in a limousine and invited by a friendly lieutenant to go with him on a tour of inspection to Metz, ending up at a camp in Lorraine where, he assured us, they would do everything to make us comfortable. His car was a small open truck with no seats, and it was pouring rain, and he was going in quite the wrong direction, but it was with real regret that we gave it up and posted ourselves on the road returning to St. Menchould meaning to take train from there to Rheims or Soissons. In a few moments we hailed an ambulance in which were an American lieutenant and a darkie chauffeur. He carried us as far as Clermont and there turned us over to the "Sallies." They came altogether up to expectation, brought us into the kitchen to get warm and dry and gave us delicious doughnuts which they were in the very act of frying with the help of some boys. They were plain, simple, unassuming women, cheerfully living a life of real hardship and endurance. The doughboys rightly loved the Sallies more than the Red Cross or the "Y." They sent us on with a genuine "God bless you" and warmed and cheered. Once more we went out on the road to

see what we could find. Peg spied a darkie with a camionette. He said his lieutenant would be there in a minute and sure enough he turned up—a nice Kentucky boy. He had not meant to go to St. Menehould at all but he said “I’ve never had a chance to do anything for a Red Cross woman and if you will accept it I would like very much to take you.” We did accept most gratefully, and he went off and brought back another lieutenant, a boy who had just graduated from Williams College. We enjoyed the ride down with them. At St. Menehould our luck still held. We came upon two Tommies with a big English ambulance who had come all the way from Metz and were going straight on to Rheims. Off we started with them at four o’clock. It was a drive through a land of desolation. We passed white trenches zigzagging across churned fields, lines of broken, tortured trees, empty gray husks of towns, all ghostly in the watery moonlight. We drove miles and miles without seeing any living thing. The road was half flooded and torn by shell holes. Shaky bridges crossed the trenches. We lost our way a number of times and once came suddenly to a place where a shell had torn so great a hole in the road that we could not pass and had to turn back and make a long detour through more wrecked and battered villages. Whenever we stopped one of the Tommies would appear at the back and report what the trouble was. One of them had an infected foot and was suffering a good deal. At last we reached Rheims about eleven. Looking for the underground civilian canteen we

drove around through one desolate ruined street after another, with never a living person or a glimmer of light beyond the pale moon. Finally we came upon two poilus who took us with great politeness to the wrong place, as usual. It was a military canteen, a low dark barrack filled with poilus and blue with wood smoke and their uniforms. There was no place to sleep but on some dirty board tables. The Tommies with true kindness offered us the ambulance with its four comfortable beds, but they were dead tired and one was half sick and we couldn't let them. With very imperfect directions from an old French codger in charge of the barrack we started out alone to look for the canteen, thinking that at the worst we could crawl under the shelter of a ruin and wait for daybreak. It was already past midnight. It was a walk through a city of the dead. Suddenly we came upon the Cathedral — beautiful and tragic. It stood in the gray white light, mysterious and haunted. The wind rushed and sighed through the open towers. There was not a sound beside, but the squeaking of rats in a ruined building and the creak of a rusty hinge as a broken shutter swayed in the wind. It was like something living and whispering with all the voices of the past and of the countless dead.

Looking down the street leading from the front of the Cathedral we saw a light and at last found the canteen. We could see a man through the basement window and called down to him to let us in, but he had his own opinion of women wandering

about Rheims after midnight and refused point blank. After arguing in vain we finally got angry and he must have reasoned that only respectability would dare anger, for he finally came up and let us in. Fortunately, all the beds in the refuge were full or we should have had to gratefully accept them, and we were relieved when he led us to a little disordered passageway where old furniture and coal scuttles and such were piled, and gave us two narrow school benches. Peg slept on one bench and Emily and I end to end on the other, the length eked out by two chairs. We rose at daylight and went down to the cellar to the canteen and had a bowl of coffee and a hunk of bread, in company with a group of forlorn refugees—men and women who had returned to look for their homes. The Cathedral by daylight was very beautiful. The fire had turned the stone a warm pinky yellow. The outline was almost untouched. It stood in pure beauty and pride in the midst of squalor and destruction.

It was time to start on again and we placed ourselves on a road which led out of the city in the direction of Soissons, where a gendarme stopped all motors to examine passes. Several trucks passed but could not take us or were not going to Soissons. I was amazed to turn and see Peg with her head stuck in the window of a limousine containing a stout French colonel. Having obtained permission Peg quickly whisked around to the front seat and left Emily and me to join the Colonel inside. He evidently thought our request fishy, as indeed it

was, for there was a train we could well have taken. He sat very straight and bouncy on the edge of the fat cushioned seat and looked at us suspiciously when he thought we were not looking. Every once in a while curiosity would get the better of him and he would ask a question and then hurriedly withdraw from any possible entanglements. We soon found it very dull and when we reached Fismes we suddenly announced that that was where we must get out—though the colonel could but remember that we had very distinctly asked to be taken to Soissons. It was with suspicions confirmed and evident relief that he saw us leave. We happily watched him speed towards Soissons and then we looked about and then looked at each other. Not a house, hardly a wall was standing. There were two or three Morroccan soldiers in red fezzes and an occasional poilu, but never a sign of motor or camion. We asked an old man where we would find camions passing for Soissons or Château Thierry. He looked grave and said, "But, Mesdames, camions for Soissons are rare, very rare—sometimes they do not come for two or three days." There was nothing to do but hope for a chance, so we walked about and ate our lunch. In a poor little garden all defiled with rubbish, and with unexploded cartridges and grenades lying about, I found some violets and a primrose. We ate our lunch in the shelter of a wall in the sun, to the distress of a kind civilian who feared we were in a "courant d'air" and asked us into his little battered house. To our relief the unexpected

camion appeared, bound for Soissons. We went through country that had been fought over and over by both our men and the French. It was strewn with the waste of war. There were great ammunition dumps everywhere, and whole towns of deserted barracks and hospitals and hundreds of abandoned camions and gun carriages, all left to fall to pieces. The banks were honeycombed with dug-outs and shelters and the fields were scarred with the zigzag line of trenches. It was the last bare ashes of war, after the flame had burnt out. It was bitter desolation.

THE END

WE knew as we sat in the train that was taking us back to Paris that never again would we start out in the cold gray of early morning from the Gare du Nord, from the Gare de l'Est, wondering what was ahead of us.

We were glad from the depths of our being that the war was over and yet honesty made us own that dismay crept behind relief and thankfulness when we thought of going back to the life of before the war. It was three weeks before we could get a boat home and during those weeks we saw our own small dismays magnified a thousand times in the men returning from the front who were flooding Paris. Reckless reaction was in the air. The streets after their long darkness blazed with lights, theaters and cafés were crowded, the shop windows were shining with jewels brought out from hiding. Thousands of American A. W. O. L. soldiers were intent upon getting drunk. Men from the armies of the world, and women too, snatched greedily at pleasure like starving people at a banquet. The first lappings of the tide of disillusion that was to set back over the whole world were creeping up the shore.

Impatient to be gone and yet dreading the moment of leaving we set out for England. For the last time we waited an hour in line at the Gare du Nord. We had hoped to find Clifford in London but he had been ordered home the morning

we arrived and we found that the sailing of the Adriatic had been put off three weeks. We were miserably homesick, half way between Paris and our families, and found it as hard to see our way to the end of those weeks as it was to see through the thick fog outside our windows.

On the Adriatic were troops from the Canadian Black Watch returning after four years of service. It was a very different company from that on the Rochambeau a year and a half ago. These men were no romantics setting forth on an adventure. They had had their fill of adventure — they wanted forgetfulness, or pleasure, or to be let alone.

The day we landed in New York was clear and sparkling. After the gray murk of Paris in winter the sky seemed incredibly blue and the air exciting. It was unreal and the most natural thing in the world to be with our beloved family again. For the first time peace seemed true — and there were no soldiers anywhere.

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