GLEASON ARTHUR

OUR PART IN THE GREAT WAR

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Содержание

SECTION I 7
I 7
II 17
III 35
IV 53
V 67
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента. 74

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To

FRANCE ON JULY 14TH

Three years of world war draw to a close, as France prepares to celebrate the birthday of her liberty. Never in the thousand years of her tumultuous history has she been so calm, so sure of the path she treads, red with the blood of her young men. She has never drunk any cup of joy so deeply as this cup of her agony. In the early months of the war, there were doubts and dismays, and the cheap talk of compromise. There were black days and black moods, and a swaying indecision. But under the immense pressure of crisis, France has lifted to a clear determination. This war will be fought to a finish. No feeble dreams of peace, entertained by loose thinkers and fluent phrase makers, no easy conciliations, will be tolerated. France has made her sacrifice. It remains now that it shall avail. She will fulfill her destiny. Time has ceased to matter, Death is only an incident in the ongoing of the nation. No tortures by mutilation, no horrors of shell fire, no massing of machine guns, can swerve the united will. The "Sacred Union" of

Socialist and royalist, peasant and politician, is firm to endure. The egoisms and bickerings of easy untested years have been drowned in a tide that sets towards the Rhine. The premier race of the world goes forth to war. That war is only in its beginning. The toll of the dead and the wounded may be doubled before the gray lines are broken. But they will be broken. A menace is to be removed for all time. The German Empire is not to rule in Paris. Atrocities are not to be justified by success. Spying will be no longer the basis of international relationship. France faces in one direction. She waits in arms at Revigny and along the water courses of the North for the machine to crack. That consummation of the long watch may be nearer than we guess. It may be many months removed. It does not matter. France waits in unshattered line, reserve on reserve, ready to the call.

Only once or twice in history has the world witnessed such a spectacle of greatness at tension. It is not that factories are busy on shells. It is that everything spiritual in a race touched with genius has been mobilized. Fineness of feeling, the graces of the intellect, clarity of thought, all the playful tender elements of worthy living are burning with a steady light.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

The author was enabled to visit Verdun and the peasant district, and to obtain access to the German diaries through J. J. Jusserand, Ambassador of France; Frank H. Simonds,

editor of the New York *Tribune*, and Theodore Roosevelt, by whose courtesy the success of the three months' visit was assured. On arrival in France the courtesy was continued by Emile Hovelaque, Madame Saint-René Taillandier, Judge Walter Berry, Mrs. Charles Prince, Leon Mirman, Prefet de Meurthe-et-Moselle, the Foreign Office and the Ministry of War.

SECTION I
AMERICANS WHO HELPED

I
THE TWO AMERICAS

There are two Americas to-day: the historic America, which still lives in many thousands of persons, and the new various America, which has not completely found itself: a people of mixed blood, divergent ideals, intent on the work at hand, furious in its pleasures, with the vitality of a new race in it, sprinting at top speed in a direction it does not yet know, to a goal it cannot see. It is in the sweep of an immense experiment, accepting all races, centering on no single strain.

This new joy-riding generation has struck out a fresh philosophy of life, which holds that many of the old responsibilities can be passed by, that the great divide has been crossed, on the hither side of which lay poverty, war, sin, pain, fear: the ancient enemies of the race. On the further side, which it is believed has at last been reached, lie, warm in the sun, prosperity and peace, a righteousness of well-being. It is a philosophy that fits snugly into a new country of tonic climate and economic opportunity, distant by three thousand miles from

historic quarrels and the pressure of crowded neighborhood. We believe that, by coming on the scene with a lot of vitality and good cheer, we can clean up the old bothersome problems and make a fresh start in the sunshine. Christian Science in a mild genial form is the national religion of America. We believe that maladies and failures can be willed out of existence. As for "the fatalities of history," "an endless war between two mutually exclusive ideals," we classify that way of thinking with the surplus luggage of autocracies.

Now, there is a wide area in life where this breezy burst of power and good-will operates effectively. It is salutary for stale vendettas, racial prejudices, diseases of the nerves, egoistic melancholias. But there are certain structural disturbances at which it takes a look and crosses to the other side, preferring to maintain its tip-top spirits and its complacency. It does not cure a broken arm, and it leaves Belgium to be hacked through. The New America trusts its melting-pot automatically to remake mixed breeds over night into citizens of the Republic. It believes that Ellis Island and the naturalization offices somehow do something with a laying on of hands which results in a nation. Meantime, we go on blindly and busily with our markets and base-ball and million-dollar films.

Troubling this enormous optimism of ours came suddenly the greatest war of the ages. We were puzzled by it for a little, and then took up again our work and pleasures, deciding that with the causes and objects of this war we were not concerned. That

was the clear decision of the new America of many races, many minds. The gifted, graceful voice of our President spoke for us what already we had determined in the silence.

But there are those of us that were not satisfied with the answer we made. The fluent now-famous phrases did not content us. It is for this remnant in our population that this book is written. From this remnant, many, numbering thousands, put by their work and pleasures, and came across the sea, some to nurse, and some to carry swift relief over dangerous roads; still others to fight behind trenches and over the earth, no few of them to die. Nearly forty thousand men have enlisted. Many hundred young college boys are driving Red Cross cars at the front. There is an American Flying Squadron. Many hundreds of American men and women are serving in hospitals. Many thousands of hard-working, simple Americans at home are devoting their spare time and their spare money to relief.

I give a few illustrations of the American effort. I have not tried to show the extent of it. I trust some day the work will be catalogued and the full account published, as belonging to history. For we have not wholly failed the Allies. I have merely sought in this book to cheer myself, and, I trust, some friends of "the good old cause, the great idea, the progress and freedom of the race." I believe that the historic America has spoken and has acted in this war. In a time when our country, perplexed by its own problems of mixed blood and warring ideas, bewildered by its great possessions, busy with its own vast work

of shaking down a continent, has made a great refusal, it is good to have the spectacle of some thousands of young Americans, embracing poverty, taking dangers and even death gladly. There is something of the ancient crusade still stirring in these bones. The race of Wendell Phillips and Whittier has representatives above ground. There was an America once that would not have stood by when its old-time companion in freedom was tasting the bayonet and the flame. Some of that America has come down to Chapman and Neville Hall, to Seeger, Chapin, Prince, Bonnell.

Nothing said here is meant to imply that the sum of all American efforts is comparable to the gift which the men of France and Belgium and England have made us. I am only saying that a minority in our population has seen that the Allies are fighting to preserve spiritual values which made our own past great, and which alone can make our future worthy.

That minority, inheriting the traditions of our race, bearing old names that have fought for liberty in other days, has clearly recognized that no such torture has come in recent centuries as German hands dealt out in obedience to German orders. In the section on French peasants, I have told of that suffering.

In another section, I am speaking to the Americans who remain indifferent to the acts of Germany. They are not convinced by the records of eye-witnesses. The wreck of Belgium is not sufficient. Will they, I wonder, be moved, if one rises from the dead. We shall see, for in this book I give the words of those who have, as it were, risen from the dead to speak

to them. I give the penciled records of dead Germans, who left little black books to tell these things they did in Flanders and the pleasant land of France.

There are many persons who are more sincerely worried lest an injustice of overstatement should be done to Germany than they are that Germany has committed injustice on Belgium and Northern France. The burned houses and murdered peasants do not touch them, but any tinge of resentment, any sign of anger, in criticizing those acts, moves them to protest. Frankly, we of the historic tradition are disturbed when we see a wave of excitement pass over the country at the arrival of a German submarine – dinners of honor, interviews with the "Viking" – Captain – and, in the same month, a perfect calm of indifference greeting the report of the French girls of Lille sent away and of families broken up and scattered. We that are shocked by the cold system of the German conquerors, and publish the facts of their methodical cruelty, are rebuked by American editors and social workers as exercising our heart emotionally at the expense of our head. But that hysteria which greets a German officer, indirectly helping in the job of perpetuating the official German system of murder and arson, is accepted as American vivacity, a sort of base-ball enthusiasm, and pleasant revelation of sporting spirit.

We believe we are not un-American, in being Pro-Ally. We believe we are holding true to the ideas which created our country – ideas brought across from the best of England, and freshened from the soul of France. We believe that Benjamin Franklin was

an American and a statesman when he wrote: —

"What would you think of a proposition, if I should make it, of a family compact between England, France and America? America would be as happy as the Sabine girls if she could be the means of uniting in perpetual peace her father and her husband."

Cheer the *Deutschland* in, and U-53,[1] but permit us to go aside a little way and mourn the dead of the *Lusitania*. All we ask, we that are held by some of the old loyalties, is that we be not counted un-American. We ask you to throw our beliefs, too, into the vast new seething mass. Let us contribute to the great experiment a little of the old collective experience. Because the marching feet of France strike a great music in our heart, do not hold us alien. We are only remembering what Washington knew. He was glad of the feet of those young men as they came

[1] Some of our people go further even than the giving of banquets to the efficient staff of the *Deutschland*. They give praise to U-53. In a newspaper, edited and owned by Americans, and published in an American Middle Western city of 40,000 inhabitants, the leading editorial on the exploits of U-53 was headed, "Hats Off to German Seamen," and the writer says:"The world in general that had educated itself to regard the German as a phlegmatic and plodding citizen will remove its headgear in token of approbation of the sustained series of sensational feats by German commanders and sailors. The entire aspect of affairs has been changed by the events of two years. The Germans have accumulated as much heroic and romantic material in that time as has been gathered by other nations since the date of the American Revolution."In the second section of this book, I have told why we talk like that. The mixture of races (mixed but not blended), the modern theory of cosmopolitanism, a self-complacency in our attitude toward Europe, an assumption that we alone champion freedom and justice, the fading of our historic tradition – these have caused us to preach internationalism, but fail to defend ourselves or the little nation of Belgium. They have led us to admire successful force.

tramping south to Yorktown.

In the immense labors of the naturalization factory, do not pause to excommunicate us, who find an ancient, unfaded freedom in England. We are moved as Lincoln was moved when he wrote to the operatives of Lancashire – Englishmen starving because of our blockade, starving but not protesting. Lincoln wrote: —

> To the Workingmen of Manchester: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of the address and resolutions which you sent me on the eve of the new year. When I came, on the fourth of March, 1861, through a free and constitutional election to preside in the Government of the United States, the country was found at the verge of civil war. Whatever might have been the cause, or whosesoever the fault, one duty, paramount to all others, was before me, namely, to maintain and preserve at once the Constitution and the integrity of the Federal Republic. A conscientious purpose to perform this duty is the key to all the measures of administration which have been and to all which will hereafter be pursued. Under our frame of government and my official oath, I could not depart from this purpose if I would. It is not always in the power of governments to enlarge or restrict the scope of moral results which follow the policies that they may deem it necessary for the public safety from time to time to adopt.
>
> I have understood well that the duty of self-preservation rests solely with the American people; but I have at the same time been aware that favor or disfavor of foreign

nations might have a material influence in enlarging or prolonging the struggle with disloyal men in which the country is engaged. A fair examination of history has served to authorize a belief that the past actions and influences of the United States were generally regarded as having been beneficial toward mankind. I have, therefore, reckoned upon the forbearance of nations. Circumstances to some of which you kindly allude induce me expecially to expect that if justice and good faith should be practiced by the United States, they would encounter no hostile influence on the part of Great Britain. It is now a pleasant duty to acknowledge the demonstration you have given of your desire that a spirit of amity and peace toward this country may prevail in the councils of your Queen, who is respected and esteemed in your own country only more than she is by the kindred nation which has its home on this side of the Atlantic.

I know and deeply deplore the sufferings which the working-men at Manchester, and in all Europe, are called to endure in this crisis. It has been often and studiously represented that the attempt to overthrow this government, which was built upon the foundations of human rights, and to substitute for it one which should rest exclusively on the basis of human slavery, was likely to obtain the favor of Europe. Through the action of our disloyal citizens, the working-men of Europe have been subjected to severe trials, for the purpose of forcing their sanction to that attempt. Under the circumstances, I cannot but regard your decisive utterances upon the question as an instance of sublime Christian heroism which has not been surpassed

> in any age or in any country. It is indeed an energetic and reinspiring assurance of the inherent power of truth, and of the ultimate and universal triumph of justice, humanity, and freedom. I do not doubt that the sentiments you have expressed will be sustained by your great nation; and, on the other hand, I have no hesitation in assuring you that they will excite admiration, esteem, and the most reciprocal feelings of friendship among the American people. I hail this interchange of sentiment, therefore, as an augury that whatever else may happen, whatever misfortune may befall your country or my own, the peace and friendship which now exist between the two nations will be, as it shall be my desire to make them, perpetual.

We believe that Lincoln would have wished his people to show a like partizanship to-day in the cause of right. Before we all steer quite out of the tested channel, let us at least remind you that those captains knew the course. It is idle to talk of a return to the past. The statesmanship of Franklin is not the statesmanship of to-day. What Lincoln felt is out of tune with the new America. We must go on with the vast new turmoils, the strange unguessed tendencies. We must find a fresh hope in the altered world. Meanwhile, be neutral, but do not bid us be neutral. You cannot silence us. We mean that our ideas shall live and fight and finally prevail.

In one section of this book I deal with what the war is teaching us. The peoples of Europe are reasserting the rights of nationality. We must understand this. We need a wholesome

sense of our own national being in the America of to-day. Nationality is the one great idea in the modern world, the one allegiance left us. It has absorbed the loyalties and fervor that used to be poured out upon art and religion. Groups of persons find emotional release in the Woman's Movement, in Trades Unions, in Socialism. But the one universal expression for the entire community is in nationalism, the assertion of selfhood as a people. Religious revivals no longer draw the mind of the mass people. But the idea of nationality sweeps them. It gives them the sense of kinship, it answers the desire for something to which to tie. It is easily possible that this idea will fade as the God of the Churches and the creative love of beauty faded. The Mazzini and Lincoln type of man may pass as the poet and the saint, Knights and Samurai, passed. But not in our time, not in a few hundred years to come. Nationalism may be only one more of the necessary "useful lies," one more illusion of the human race. But it will serve out our days. The mistake is in thinking that the heart of the common people will ever be satisfied with a bare mechanic civilization. Men are unwilling to live unless they have something to die for. We have filled the foreground in recent years with new automatic machines, new subdivisions of repetitive process. We tried to empty the huge modern world of its old values. Then the people came and smashed the structure, and found a vast emotional release in the war. The hope of a sane future is not in suppressing that dynamic of nationality. We must direct it.

II
THE AMERICAN AMBULANCE HOSPITAL

The recital of the young college boy crowding his ambulance between singing shells and bringing in his wounded down death's alley is familiar and stirring. And this, for most of us, has been the entire story. But that is only the first chapter. It is of no value to bring in a wounded man, unless there is a field hospital to give him swift and wise treatment, unless there is a well-equipped hospital-train to run him gently down to Paris, unless there are efficient stretcher bearers at the railroad station to unload him, and ambulances to transport him to new quarters. And finally, most important of all, the base hospital that at last receives him must be furnished with skilled doctors, surgeons, nurses and orderlies, or all the haste of transportation has gone for nothing. For it is in the base hospital that the final and greatest work with the wounded man is wrought out, which will let him go forth a whole man, with limbs his own and a face unmarred, or will discharge him a wrecked creature, crippled, monstrous, because of bungled treatment. It is a chain with no weak link that must be forged from the hour of the wounding at Verdun to the day of hospital discharge at Neuilly. And that final success of the restored soldier is built upon the loyalty of hundreds of obscure

helpers, far back of the lines of glory. That which is fine about it is the very absence of the large scale romantic. It is humble service humbly given, with no war-medals in sight, no mention in official dispatches – only a steady fatiguing drive against bugs and dirt and germs and red tape.

So I begin my story with the work of the Scotch-American at the entrance of the American Ambulance Hospital at Neuilly-sur-Seine. He is the man that gives every entering wounded soldier a bath, and he does it thoroughly in four and a half minutes. He can bathe twelve inside the hour. He has perfected devices, so that a fractured leg won't be hurt while the man is being scrubbed. He has worked out foot-rests, and body-rests and neck-rests in the tub. This man has taken his lowly job and made it into one of the important departments of the hospital. And with him begins, too, the long tale of inventive appliances which are lessening suffering. The hospital is full of them in each branch of the service. Everywhere you go in relief work of this war, you see devices – little things that relieve pain, and save time and speed up recovery. That is one of the things differentiating this war from the old-time slaughters, where most of the seriously wounded died: the omnipresence of mechanical, electrical, devices. Inventive skill has wreaked itself on the sudden awful human need. The hideously clever bombs, and big guns, all the ingenious instruments of torture, will shoot themselves away and pass. But the innumerable appliances of restoration, the machinery of welfare, suddenly called into being

out of the mechanic brain of our time, under pressure of the agonizing need, will go on with their ministry when Lorraine is again green.

The Ambulance is the cheeriest, the cleanest, the most efficient place which I have visited since the beginning of the war. There is no hospital odor anywhere. Fresh air and sunshine are in the wards. A vagrant from Mars or the moon, who wanted an answer to some of his questions about the lay-out of things, would find his quest shortened by spending an afternoon at the American Ambulance.

What does America mean? What is it trying to do? How does it differ from other sections of the map?

The swift emergency handling of each situation has been American in its executive efficiency. Things have been done in a hurry, and done well. In eighteen days this building was taken over from a partially completed school, with the refuse of construction work heaped high, and made into an actively-running hospital ready for 175 patients. That, too, in those early days of war, when workmen had been called to the colors, when money was unobtainable, transportation tied up, and Germany pounding down on Paris.

The skillful surgical work, some of it pioneering in fields untouched by former experience, has been a demonstration of the best American practice.

The extraordinarily varied types of persons at work under one roof in a democracy of service presents just the aspect of our

community which is most representative. Millionaires and an impersonator, Harvard, Dartmouth, Tech, Columbia, Fordham, Michigan, Princeton, Cornell and Yale men, ranchers, lawyers, and newspaper men – all are hard at work on terms of exact equality. A colored man came in one day. He said he wanted to help with the wounded. He was tried out, and proved himself one of the best helpers in the organization. He received the same treatment as all other helpers, eating with them, liked by them. Some weeks later, one of our wealthy "high-life" young Americans volunteered his services. After the first meal he came wrathfully to the surgeon.

"I've had to eat at the same table with a negro. That must be changed. What will you do about it?"

"Do about it," answered the surgeon. "You will do one of two things – go and apologize to a better man than you are, or walk out of this hospital."

Recently this black helper came to the director in distress of mind.

"Have to leave you," he said. He held out a letter from the motor car firm, near Paris, where he he had worked before the war. It was a request for him to return at once. If he did not obey now in this time of need, it meant there would never be any position for him after the war as long as he lived.

A day or two later he came again.

"My old woman and I have been talking it over," he said, "and I just can't leave this work for the wounded. We'll get along some

way."

A little more time passed, and then, one day, he stepped up to the director and said:

"I want you to meet my boss."

The superintendent of the motor car factory had come. He said to the director:

"I have received the most touching letter from this darkey, saying he couldn't come back to us because he must help here. Now I want to tell you that his position is open to him any time that he wants it, during the war, or after it."

Visitors, after walking through the wards, smelling no odors, hearing no groans, seeing the faces of the men smiling back at them, are constantly saying to the director:

"Ah, I see you have no really serious cases here."

It is the only kind of case sent to Neuilly – the gravely wounded man, the "*grands blessés*," requiring infinite skill to save the limb and life. So sweet and hopeful is the "feel" of the place that not even 575 beds of men in extremity can poison that atmosphere of successful practice. Alice's Queen had a certain casual promptness in saying, "Off with his head," whenever she sighted a subject. And there was some of the same spirit in the old-time war-surgeon when he was confronted with a case of multiple fracture. "Amputate. Off with his leg. Off with his arm." And that, in the majority of cases, was the same as guillotining the patient, for the man later died from infection. There was a surgical ward in one of the 1870 Paris hospitals with

an unbroken record of death for every major operation. At the American Ambulance, out of the first 3,100 operations, there were 81 amputations. The death rate for the first year was 4.46 per cent.

These gunshot injuries, involving compound and multiple fractures, are treated by incision, and drainage of the infected wounds and the removal of foreign bodies. A large element in the success has been the ingenuity of the staff in creating appliances that give efficient drainage to the wound and comfort to the patient. The same inventive skill is at work in the wards that we saw on entering the hospital in the bathroom of the Scotch-American. These devices, swinging from a height over the bed, are slats of wood to which are jointed the splints for holding the leg or arm in a position where the wound will drain without causing pain to the recumbent man. The appearance of a ward full of these swinging appliances is a little like that of a gymnasium. Half the wounded men riding into Paris ask to be taken to the American Hospital. They know the high chance of recovery they will have there and the personal consideration they will receive. The Major-General enjoys the best which the Hospital can offer. So does the sailor boy from the Fusiliers Marins.

We had spent about an hour in the wards. We had seen the flying man who had been shot to pieces in the air, but had sailed back to his own lines, made his report and collapsed. We had talked with the man whose face had been obliterated, and who

was now as he had once been, except for a little ridge of flesh on his lower left cheek. I had seen a hundred men brighten as the surgeon "jollied" them. The cases were beginning to merge for me into one general picture of a patient, contented peasant in a clean bed with a friend chatting with him, and the gift of fruit or a bottle of champagne on the little table by his head. I was beginning to lose the sense of the personal in the immense, well-conducted institution, with its routine and system. After all, these men represented the necessary wastage of war, and here was a business organization to deal with these by-products. I was forgetting that it was somebody's husband in front of me, and only thinking that he was a lucky fellow to be in such a well-ordered place.

Then the whole sharp individualizing work of the war came back in a stab, for we had reached the bed of the American boy who had fought with the Foreign Legion since September, 1914.

"Your name is Bonnell?" I asked.

"Yes."

"Do you spell it B-o-n-n-e double l?"

"Yes."

"By any chance, do you know a friend of mine, Charles Bonnell?"

"He's my uncle."

And right there in the presence of the boy in blue-striped pajamas, my mind went back over the years. Twenty-seven years ago, I had come to New York, and grown to know the tall, quiet

man, six feet two he was, and kind to small boys. He was head of a book-store then and now. For these twenty-seven years I have known him, one of my best friends, and here was his nephew.

"Do you think I'm taller than my uncle?" the boy asked, standing up. He stood erect: you would never have known there was any trouble down below. But as my eye went up and down the fine slim figure, I saw that his right leg was off at the knee.

"I can't play base-ball any more," he said.

"No, but you can go to the games," said the director; "that's all the most of us do.

"I wish I had come here sooner," he went on as he sat back on the bed: standing was a strain. He meant he might have saved his leg.

We came away.

"Now he wants to go into the flying corps," said the surgeon.

He still had his two arms, and the loss of a leg didn't so much matter when you fly instead of march.

"Flying is the only old-fashioned thing left," remarked the boy, in a later talk. "You might as well work in a factory as fight in a trench – only there's no whistle for time off."

I have almost omitted the nurses from this chapter, because we have grown so used to loyalty and devotion in women that these qualities in them do not constitute news. The trained nurses of the Ambulance Hospital, with half a dozen exceptions, are Americans, with a long hospital experience at home. During the early months they served with no remuneration. An allowance of

100 francs a month has now been established. They reluctantly accepted this, as each was anxious to continue on the purely voluntary basis. There are also volunteer auxiliary nurses, who serve as assistants to the trained women. The entire nursing staff has been efficient and self-sacrificing.

We entered the department where some of the most brilliant surgical work of the war has been done. It is devoted to those cases where the face has been damaged. The cabinet is filled with photographs, the wall is lined with masks, revealing the injury when the wounded man entered, and then the steps in the restoration of the face to its original structure and look. There in front of me were the reproductions of the injury: the chin shot away, the cheeks in shreds, the mouth a yawning aperture, holes where once was a nose – all the ghastly pranks of shell-fire tearing away the structure, wiping out the human look. Masks were there on the wall of man after man who would have gone back into life a monster, a thing for children to run from, but brought back inside the human race, restored to the semblance of peasant father, the face again the recorder of kindly expression. The surgeon and the dental expert work together on these cases. The success belongs equally to each of the two men. Between them they make a restoration of function and of appearance.

In peace days, a city hospital would have only three or four fractures of the jaw in a year, and they were single fractures. There are no accidents in ordinary life to produce the hideous results of shell-fire. So there was no experience to go on. There

were no reference books recording the treatment of wounds to the face caused by the projectiles of modern warfare. Hideous and unprecedented were the cases dumped by the hundreds into the American Ambulance. Because of the pioneer success of this hospital, the number of these cases has steadily increased. They are classified as "gunshot wounds of the face, involving the maxillæ, and requiring the intervention of dental surgery." These are compound fractures of the jaw, nearly always accompanied by loss of the soft parts of the mouth and chin, sometimes by the almost complete loss of the face.

I have seen this war at its worst. I have seen the largest hospital in France filled with the grievously-wounded. I have seen the wounded out in the fields of Ypres, waiting to be carried in. I have seen the Maison Blanche thronged with the Army of the Mutilated. I have carried out the dead from hospital and ambulance, and I have watched them lie in strange ways where the great shell had struck. But death is a pleasant gift, and the loss of a limb is light. For death leaves a rich memory. And a crippled soldier is dearer than he ever was to the little group that knows him. But to be made into that which is terrifying to the children that were once glad of him, to bring shrinking to the woman that loved him – that is the foulest thing done by war to the soldier. So it was the most gallant of all relief work that I have seen – this restoration of disfigured soldiers to their own proper appearance.

And the work of these hundreds of Americans at Neuilly was summed for me in the person of one dental surgeon, who sat a few

feet from those forty masks and those six hundred photographs, working at a plaster-cast of a shattered jaw. He was very much American – rangy and loose-jointed, with a twang and a drawl, wondering why the blazes a writing person was bothering a man at work. It was his time off, after six days of patient fitting of part to part, and that for a year. So he was taking his day off to transform one more soldier from a raw pulp to a human being. There were no motor car dashes, and no military medals, for him. Only hard work on suffering men. There he sat at his pioneer work in a realm unplumbed by the mind of man. It called on deeper centers of adventure than any jungle-exploration or battle-exploit. It was science at its proper business of salvation. Those Krupp howitzers were not to have their own way, after all. Here he was, wiping out all the foul indignities which German scientists had schemed in their laboratories.

Two days later, I saw the boys of the American Ambulance unload the wounded of Verdun from the famous American train. The announcement of the train's approach was simple enough – these words scribbled in pencil by the French authorities:

"12 Musulman
"241 Blessés
"8 Officiers
"1 Malade
"Train Américain de Revigny."

Those twelve "Musulman" are worth pausing with for a moment. They are Mohammedans of the French colonies, who

must be specially fed because their religion does not permit them to eat of the unholy food of unbelievers. So a hospital provides a proper menu for them.

Add the figures, and you have 262 soldiers on stretchers to be handled by the squad of 38 men from the American Ambulance. They marched up the platform in excellent military formation. The train rolled in, and they jumped aboard, four to each of the eight large cars, holding 36 men each. In twenty-seven minutes they had cleared the train, and deposited the stretchers on the platforms. There the wounded pass into the hands of French orderlies, who carry them to the French doctors in waiting in the station. As quickly the doctor passed the wounded, the boys took hold again and loaded the ambulances en route to Paris hospitals. It was all breathless, perspiring work, but without a slip. There is never a slip, and that is why they are doing this work. The American Ambulance has the job of unloading three-fourths of all the wounded that come into Paris. The boys are strong and sure-handed, and the War Ministry rests easy in letting them deal with this delicate, important work. They feel pride in a prompt clean-cut job. But, more than that, they have a deep inarticulate desire to make things easier for a man in pain. I saw the boys pick up stretcher after stretcher as it lay on the platform and hurry it to the doctor. That wasn't their job at all. Their job was only to unload the train, but they could not let a wounded man lie waiting for red tape. I watched one long-legged chap who ran from the job he had just completed to each new place of need, doing three

times as much work as even his strenuous duty called for.

"Look here," I said to Budd, the young Texan, who is Lieutenant of the Station squad. I pointed to a man on a stretcher. My eye had only shown me that the sight was strange and pathetic. But his quicker eye caught that the man needed help. He ran over to him and struck a match as he went. The soldier had his face swathed in bandages. Arms and hands were thick with bandages, so that every gesture he made was bungling. He had a cigarette in his mouth, just clear of the white linen. But he couldn't bring a match and the box together in his muffled hands so as to get a light. He was making queer, unavailing motions, like a baby's. In another second he was contentedly smoking and telling his story. A hand grenade which he was throwing had exploded prematurely in his hands and face.

Work at the front is pretty good fun. There is a lot of camaraderie with the fighting men: the exchange of a smoke and a talk, and the sense of being at the center of things. The war zone, whatever its faults, is the focal point of interest for all the world. It is something to be in the storm center of history. But this gruelling unromantic work back in Paris is lacking in all those elements. No one claps you on the back, and says:

"Big work, old top. We've been reading about you. Glad you got your medal. It must be hell under fire. But we always knew you had it in you. Come around to the Alumni Association banquet and give us a talk. Prexy will be there, and we'll put you down for the other speech of the evening."

What the people say is this:

"Ah, back in Paris, were you? Not much to do there, I guess. Must have been slow. Couldn't work it to get the front? Well, we can't all be heroes. Have you met Dick? He was at Verdun, you know. Big time. Had a splinter go through his hood. Better come round to our annual feed, and hear him tell about it. So long. See you again."

But the boys themselves know, and the hurt soldiers know, and the War Minister of France knows. These very much unadvertised young Americans, your sons and brothers, reader, often sit up all night waiting for a delayed train.

These boys of ours, shifting stretchers, wheeling legless men to a place in the sun, driving ambulances, are the most fortunate youth in fifty years. They are being infected by a finer air than any that has blown through our consciousness since John Brown's time. And the older Americans over here have that Civil War tradition in their blood. They are gray-haired and some of them white-haired. For, all over our country, individual Americans are breaking from the tame herd and taking the old trail, again, the trail of hardships and sacrifice. They have found something wrong with America, and want to make it right. I saw it in the man from Philadelphia, a well-to-do lawyer who crossed in the boat with me. He was gray-haired, the father of three children, one a boy of twenty-one. He was taking his first real vacation after a lifetime of concentrated successful work. I saw him lifting stretchers out of the Verdun train.

Boys and old men with an equal faith. The generation that isn't much represented over here is that of the in-betweeners, men between thirty-five and fifty years of age. They grew up in a time when our national patriotism was sagging, when security and fat profits looked more inviting than sacrifice for the common good. Our country will not soon be so low again as in the period that bred these total abstainers from the public welfare. The men and boys who have worked here are going to return to our community – several hundred have already returned – with a profound dissatisfaction with our national life as it has been conducted in recent years.

I have left the American train standing at the platform all this time, but it rests there till the afternoon, for it takes three hours to clean it for its trip back to the front. Only three hours – one more swift job by our contingent. It is the best ambulance train in France. The huge luggage vans of the trans-continental expresses were requisitioned. Two American surgeons and one French Medecin Chef travel with the wounded men. It carries 240 stretchers and 24 sitting cases in its eight cars for "*Les blessés.*" The five other cars are devoted to an operating room, a kitchen for bouillon, a dining car, a sleeping car for the surgeons, and the other details of administration. Safety, speed and comfort are its slogan. The stretchers rest on firm wooden supports riding on an iron spring. The entire train is clean, sweet smelling, and travels easily. J. E. Rochfort, who has charge of it, went around to the men on stretchers as they lay on the platform.

"You rode easily?" he asked.

"*Très bien: très confortable.*"

If an emergency case develops during the long ride, the train stops while the operation is performed. It is also held up at times by the necessities of war. For the wounded must be side-tracked for more important items of military demand – shells, food, fresh troops.

Village and town along its route turn out and throng the station to see the "*Train Americain*." The exterior of the cars carries a French flag at one end, and, at the other, the American flag. I like to think of our flag, painted on the brown panel of every car of the great train, and brightly scoured each day, riding through France from Verdun to Paris, from Biarritz to Revigny, and the thousands of simple people watching its progress, knowing its precious freight of wounded, saying, "*Le train Americain*," as they sight the painted emblem. It is where it belongs – side by side with the Tricolor. There isn't a great question loose on the planet to-day, where the best of us isn't in accord with the best of France.

That is the biggest thing we are doing over there, carrying a message of good-will from the Yser to Belfort, up and down and clear across France, and "every town and every hamlet has heard" not our "trumpet blast," but the whirr of our rescue motors and the sweetly running wheels of our express. It is one with the work of the Ambulance Hospital, where, after the bitter weeks of healing, the young soldier of France receives his discharge

from hospital. Looking on the photograph and plaster cast of what shell-fire had made of him, and seeing himself restored to the old manner of man, he has a feeling of friendliness for the Americans who saved him from the horror that might have been. The man whose bed lay next walks out on his own two legs instead of hobbling crippled for the rest of his life, and he remembers those curious devices of swinging splints, which eased the pain and saved the leg. He, too, holds a kindly feeling for the nation that has made him not only a well man, but a whole man. And America has two more friends in France, in some little village of the province.

This work of the hospital, the train, the motor ambulance, is doing away with the shock and hurt of our aloofness. These young Americans, stretcher-bearers and orderlies, surgeons and nurses, drivers and doctors, are unconscious statesmen. They are building for us a better foreign policy. It is a long distance for friendly voices of America to carry across the Atlantic. But these helpers are on the spot, moving among the common people and creating an international relationship which not even the severe strain of a dreary aloofness can undo. Our true foreign policy is being worked out at Neuilly and through the war-cursed villages. This is our answer to indifference: the gliding of the immense train through France, carrying men in agony to a sure relief; the swift, tender handling of those wounded in their progress from the trench to the ward; the making over of these shattered soldiers into efficient citizens.

The quarrel none of ours?

The suffering is very much ours.

Too proud to fight?

Not too proud to carry bed-pans and wash mud-caked, blood-marked men. Not too proud to be shot at in going where they lie.

Neutrality of word and thought?

We are the friends of these champions of all the values we hold dear.

War profits out of their blood?

Many hundreds have given up their life-work, their career, their homes, to work in lowly ways, with no penny of profit, no hope of glory, "just because she's France."

III
THE FORD CAR AND ITS DRIVERS

This is the story of the American Ambulance Field Service in the words of the boys themselves who drove the cars. Fresh to their experience, they jotted down the things that happened to them in this strange new life of war. These notes, sometimes in pencil, sometimes written with the pocket fountain pen, they sent to their chief, Piatt Andrew, and he has placed these unpublished day-by-day records of two hundred men at my disposal. Anybody would be stupid who tried to rewrite their reports. I am simply passing along what they say.

One section of the Field Service with twenty cars was thrown out into Alsace for the campaign on the crest of Hartmannsweilerkopf. Here is some of the fiercest fighting of the war. Hartmannsweilerkopf is the last mountain before the Plain of the Rhine, and commands that valley. The hill crest was taken and retaken. Here, too, is the one sector of the Western Front where the French are fighting in the enemy's country. Alsace has been German territory for forty-three years. The district known as Haute Alsace is a range of mountains, running roughly north and south; to the east lies German Alsace, to the west the level country of French Alsace. On the crest of the mountains the armies of France and Germany have faced each other. The business of the ambulances has been to bring wounded

from those heights to the railway stations in the plain.

John Melcher, Jr., says of this work:

"The mountain service consists in climbing to the top of a mountain, some 4,000 feet high, where the wounded are brought to us. Two cars are always kept in a little village down the mountain on the other side. This little village is a few kilometers behind the trenches, and is sometimes bombarded by the Germans. The roads up the mountain are very steep, particularly on the Alsatian side. They are rough and so narrow that in places vehicles cannot pass. These roads are full of ruts, and at some points are corduroy, the wood practically forming steps. On one side there is always a sheer precipice."

"If you go off the road," writes one of our young drivers, "it is probably to stay, and all the while a grade that in some parts has to be rushed in low speed to be surmounted. Add to this the fact that in the rainy (or usual) weather of the Vosges, the upper half is in the clouds, and seeing becomes nearly impossible, especially at night. Before our advent the wounded were transported in wagons or on mule-backs, two stretchers, one on each side of the mule. Two of us tried this method of travel and were nearly sick in a few minutes. Imagine the wounded – five hours for the trip! That so many survived speaks well for the hardihood of the "Blue Devils." Now with our cars the trip takes 1½ or 2 hours. We get as close to the trenches as any cars go. Our wounded are brought to us on trucks like wheelbarrows, or, at night, on mules, about one-half hour after the wound is received. This is hard service

for both cars and drivers, and it is done in turn for five days at a time; then we return to St. Maurice to care for the cars and rest; the ordinary valley service is regarded by us as rest after the spell on the hills.

"Car 170 (the E. J. de Coppet Car) has been doing well on this strenuous work. The two back fenders have been removed, one by a rock in passing an ammunition wagon, and the other by one of the famous "75's" going down the hill.

"The men appreciate it. Often, back in France, we are trailed as the 'voitures' they have seen at Mittlach, or as the car which brought a comrade back. They express curiosity as to our exact military status. The usual thing when we explain that we are volunteers is for them to say "chic." When they learn that the cars are given by men in the United States whose sympathy is with them, they nod approval."

Another man writes of the condition of the service:

"At Cheniménil, the headquarters of the automobile service for this section, we reported to Captain Arboux, and were informed by him of the terms on which he had decided to accept our services. We were to draw our food, wine, tobacco, automobile supplies, such as tires, oil, gasoline, from the Seventh Army, as well as our lodging, and one sou a day as pay. In short, we were to be treated exactly as the French Ambulance sections, and to be subject to the same discipline."

Rations consist of a portion of meat, hard bread – baked some weeks previously – rice, beans, macaroni or potatoes, a lump of

grease for cooking, coffee, sugar and a little wine. For soldiers on duty there are field kitchens, fire and boilers running on wheels. But billeted men have their food cooked by some village woman, or a group build wood fires against a wall. Our men made arrangements to mess at a restaurant.

The work was so continuous that some of the men drove for as long as fifty hours without sleep, and no one had time for more than an occasional nap of an hour and a half.

After the battle of Hartmannsweilerkopf the section was decorated as a whole, and twelve men individually were decorated. Lovering Hill of Harvard has been in charge of this section. He has received two citations, two Croix de Guerre, which he doesn't wear, because he knows that the Western Front is full of good men who have not been decorated. The boys formed "The Harvard Club of Alsace Reconquise," and had Harvard Alumni Dinners when the fighting eased up.

"I think that we have saved the wounded many hours of suffering," writes Henry M. Suckley of Harvard, 1910. In that quiet statement lies the spirit of the work done by the American Field Service.

From the head of the Valley of the Fecht, over 10 miles of mountain, 5 up and 5 down, to Krut on the other side – that has been the run.

W. K. H. Emerson, Jr., says:

"Once I went over a bank in an attempt to pass a convoy wagon at night without a headlight, such light being forbidden over part

of the Mitlach road. I was lucky enough to lean up against a tree before slipping very far over the bank, and within ten minutes ten soldiers had lifted the machine, and put it back on the road, ready to start. Nothing was wrong but the loss of one sidelight, and the car went better than before. There was great merriment among the men who helped to put it on the road."

After four months the section had its barracks, at the 4,000-foot level, blown down by a gale. So they used a new road. Suckley writes of finding two huge trees across the path.

"I had three wounded men in the car, whom I was hurrying to the hospital. I walked down two miles to get some men at a camp of engineers, the road being too narrow to permit turning. There is a new service to the famous Hartmannsweilerkopf, or, rather, within half a mile of this most southerly mount contested by the Germans. For three miles it is cut out of the solid rock, just wide enough for one of our cars to pass. You can imagine the joys of this drive on a dark night when you have to extinguish all lights, and when the speed of the car cannot be reduced for fear of not making the grades. The first aid post, called Silberloch, is but 200 or 300 yards from the famous crest which has been the scene of many fierce combats. The bursting of shells has taken every bit of foliage from the wooded crest, carried pines to the ground, so that only a few splintered stumps stick up here and there. At the post no one dares show himself in the open. All life is subterranean in bomb-proofs covered by five feet of timber. The road is concealed everywhere by screens, and the

sound of a motor may bring a hail of shells down on your head. The stretcher bearers are so used to meeting death in its worst forms – by burning oil, by shell fragments, by suffocating shells – that they have grown to look at it smilingly."

It is a St. Paul's School car that operates there.

"Another time the run was up to an artillery post in the mountains. The road was extremely steep near the top, and covered with gravel. It was only by hard effort that a dozen men could push the car up. We ran to the communicating trench, where they had the man waiting. He was wounded in the abdomen, and in great pain. We started down over the terrible road; at every pebble he would groan. When we reached the worst place of all, where the road had recently been mended with unbroken stones, his groans began to grow fainter. They ceased, and, stopping, we found that he was dead. But there had been a chance of saving his life. A larger car could not have gone up. A wagon or a mule would have caused his death almost immediately.

"On one of our hills in winter a team of six Red Cross men was kept on duty waiting for our ambulance to come along. The cars would go as far as possible up the incline, and before they lost speed would be practically carried to the crest on the shoulders of the pushers – mules, with their drivers hanging on the beasts' tails to make the ascent easier. Strapped on these animals are barbed wire and hand-grenades, red wine and sections of the army portable houses."

Such is winter in Alsace.

"Luke Doyle had driven his car to the entrance of the Hartmanns trenches and our last post, when a heavy bombardment forced every one to make for the bomb-proof. Several men were wounded and he came out to crank his car and carry them off when he was ordered back to safety. A few moments later a shell landed close to the 'abri.' It struck a man and killed him. A flying piece reached Doyle and entered his elbow. Another of our section, Douglas, arrived, and was knocked flat by a bursting shell. He rose, put Doyle in his car and drove him up the road to safety."

Another time, Jack Clark writes:

"Car 161 still lives up to her reputation. Yesterday, in a blizzard, she was blown off the road between two trees, over three piles of rock, through a fence and into a ditch. Three men and a horse removed her from the pasture, and she went on as ever."

Car 163 had 13 cases of tire trouble in two weeks. The whole success of the adventure depends on the condition of the cars. So through all the narrative of shell-fire and suffering men recurs the theme of roads and tires, axle-trouble and hill-grades. The adventure of the car itself is as real as that of the man. The car becomes a personality to the man at the wheel, just as the locomotive is to the engineer. It isn't any old car. It is the little Ford, Number 121, given by Mrs. Richard Trowbridge of Roxbury, Mass. In that particular car you have carried 500

wounded men, you have gone into the ditch, stuck in the mud, and scurried under shell-fire, shrapnel has torn the cover, and there is the mark of a rifle-bullet on the wheel-spoke. You have slept at the wheel and in the chassis, after hours of work. You have eaten luncheons for two months on the front seat. The reader must not get very far away from the ambulance-car in making his mental picture of the experience of the boys in North France, and he must not object if all through this chapter he gets the smell of grease and petrol, and if the explosions are tires as often as shells. Because that is the way it is at the front. These boys never take their eyes from the road and the car. So why should we who read of them?

There is a certain Detroit manufacturer who has a large and legitimate advertisement coming to him. If he will collect the hundred fervid and humorous comments written into the records of the field service he will have a publicity pamphlet which will outlive "A Message to Garcia." For this job of the jitneys is more than carrying orders; it is bringing wounded men over impossible routes, where four wheels and a motor were never supposed to go. Mr. Ford with his ship accomplished nothing, but Mr. Ford with his cars has done much in getting the boys out of the trenches. They would have lain there wounded for an hour, two hours, in the Alsace district for twelve hours longer, if his nimble jitneys had not chugged up to the boyau and dressing station.

"We expected to be kept rolling all night." To "keep rolling" is their phrase for driving the car.

"The next sixty hours were not divided into days for us. We ran steadily, not stopping for meals or sleep except during the brief pauses in the stream of wounded. Except for one memorable and enormous breakfast at the end of the first 24 hours, I ate while driving, steering with one hand, holding bread and cheese in the other. The first lull I slept an hour and a half, the second night there was no lull and I drove until I went to sleep several times at the wheel. Then I took three hours' rest and went on. Gasoline, oil and carbide ran low; we used all our spare tires. One of our men ran into a ditch with three seriously wounded soldiers, and upset. Another man broke his rear axle. During the two and one-half days of the attack, over 250 wounded were moved by our 15 cars a distance of 40 kilometers."

Ambulance work depends on the supply of gasoline, oil, carbide and spare parts, solid rations and sleep. Success rests in patching tires, scraping carbon and changing springs. Any idea of ambulance work is off the mark that thinks it a succession of San Juan charges. It is hard, unpicturesque work, with an occasional fifteen minutes of tension.

"A stretcher makes a serviceable bed, and, warmly wrapped in blankets, one can sleep very comfortably in an ambulance."

"A climb of 800 meters in less than 10 kilometers involves mechanical stress."

"The unique spring suspension and light body construction make our cars the most comfortable for the wounded of all the types in service."

A mechanical detail – but it is in these bits of ingenious mechanical adaptation to human needs that the American contribution has been made. It isn't half enough in a machine-made war to be dashing and picturesque. You must fight destructive machinery with still cleverer engines of relief. The inventive brain must operate as well as the kind heart and the spirit of fearlessness. It is in the combination of courage and mechanical versatility that the best of the American quality has been revealed.

Flashes of the soldier life are given by the boys. Canned beef is called by the poilu "singe," or monkey meat.

"All that is impossible is explained by a simple 'c'est la guerre.' Why else blindly scrape one's way past a creaking truck of shells, testing 20 horses, two abreast, steaming in their own cloud of sweaty vapor? Why else descend slopes with every brake afire, with three human bodies as cargo, where a broken drive shaft leaves but one instantaneous twist of the wheel for salvation, a thrust straight into the bank, smashing the car but saving its load? 'C'est la guerre.'"

"'Chasseurs Alpines': a short, dark-blue jacket, gray trousers, spiral puttees, and the jaunty soft hat 'bérets.' These are the famous 'blue devils.'"

"I, who came for four months and have been working eight, can assure any one who is considering joining the American Ambulance that he will go home with a feeling of great satisfaction at having been able to help out a little a nation that

appreciates it, and that is bearing the brunt of the fighting on the Western Front."

"Among the wounded that our cars carried, was the General of the Division – General Serret" – brought down from the height he had held to be amputated and to die.

Another section of twenty-four cars started in at Esternay at the time of the spring freshets, when life was chilly and wet. Eleven received individually the Croix de Guerre. This section served two divisions of the second French Army and had a battle front of from seven to ten miles – the St. Mihiel sector, a region subject to artillery fire. It has been commanded by Oliver Hazard Perry, a descendant of Commodore Perry.

They had 1,800 wounded a week, and a mileage of 5,000 kilometers.

"Sudbury broke his arm cranking, this morning."

The service was brisk. Shroder with two wounded was rounding a corner when a shell hit so close as to jump his car up. One car came in from service in July with 23 shrapnel holes. On July 8, within 24 hours, the boys of this section carried 997 wounded.

"During the bombardment the trenches were so smashed by continuous fire as to cease to be trenches: the men lay in holes in the ground. They would come down when relieved, dazed and sometimes weeping, yet they held their ground." Long waits and frantic activity: dullness and horror alternating. Nine members of the ambulances were in the house against which a shell exploded.

A soldier was killed and one mortally wounded. The Americans were thrown in a heap on the floor. "Now, the section occupies a large house just outside the town. There is a large hole in the garden where a shell alighted soon after this became our new quarters; but the good fortune of the Ambulance is with it still."

"To Clos Bois. Sharp shrapnel fire. Small branches and leaves showered down in the wood. It was necessary for two of our men, whose ambulances stood in the open to expose themselves in putting stretchers in the cars. Great courage was displayed by McConnell, who was active in this work even when not required to be so, and who was hit in the back by a fragment of shell, sustaining, however, no further injury than a bad bruise. Mention should be made of Martin, who drove away with his car full of wounded while the firing was still going on, a bullet mark in his steering-gear, and a spare tire on the roof punctured."

The order of the day, July 22, cited the American section, "Composed of volunteers, friends of our country."

Here are a half dozen impressions that come to the men in the course of their work.

"I counted one evening fifteen balls, within a space of a dozen yards of the doorway where I was sheltering."

"The dark houses, deserted streets, the dim shape of a sentry, the night scents of the fields" – these are what the evening run reveals.

"On the one hand are the trenches where men live in conditions which must resemble those of the cave men: dug into

the earth, and with danger of death as a daily habit; on the other, within half an hour's walk, most of the comforts of civilization. We come down from the work of carrying hundreds of mangled men, and in the evening sit eating strawberries and cake in a pretty drawing-room."

"The wounded had a curiously unconcerned appearance, as though having been hit already they are immune."

"Our young heroes – " Yes, they are all of that, fearless, and swift to act. But they are practical heroes – good mechanicians, ready to lend a hand on any lowly job of washing a stretcher or shifting furniture. I like the rough-neck way of the American Ambulance. There has been a snobbish attempt made to describe these young workers as belonging to our "best families," representing the "elite" of America. That is to miss the point of the work. It is democratic service. Work hard and you are a popular member of the community. This Lorraine section went to Verdun, and Robert Toms of Marion, Iowa, wrote me:

"Everybody has the right spirit, and we are all working together. We are living the real army life – sleeping out of doors and eating in a barn."

One of the Verdun sections was sent to Bar-le-Duc recently where a bombardment by fourteen German aeroplanes was under way. Forty persons were killed and 160 injured. The boys cruised around the streets during the overhead shelling of forty-five minutes, picking up the dead and wounded. Almost all the cars were hit by fragments of shell. This prompt aid under fire

endeared the American Ambulance to the inhabitants of that town. Next day one of the drivers took his coat to a tailor for repair. The man refused to accept any pay from one who had helped his city.

A few of us were sitting around quietly one day when a French sous-officer entered, in a condition of what seems to our inarticulate Northern stolidity as excitement, but what in reality is merely clear expression of warm emotion. He said:

"The people of Bar-le-Duc are grateful for what the Americans have done. Your work was excellent, wonderful. We will not forget it."

This work of the American Ambulance Field Service is the most brilliant, the most widely known of any we are doing in France. As we motored through Lorraine, Major Humbert, brother of the Commanding General of the Third Division, stopped three of us, Americans, and said he wished to tell us, as spokesman to our country, that the American Ambulance Service gave great satisfaction to the French Army. "It is courageous and useful. We thank you."

A Flanders section was sent out, ten cars at first. They served at the Second Battle of the Yser, when gas was used for the first time by the enemy. It is a flat country and they ran close to the battle-front. They were billeted at Elverdinghe till the village crumbled under shell fire.

The work was in part "cleaning plugs and cylinders, tightening nuts and bolts, oiling and greasing, washing our little cars just

as though they were a lot of dirty kiddies." The cars receive pet names of Susan, and Beatrice, and The Contagious Bus. The Contagious Bus, Car 82, driven by Hayden, carried 187 contagious cases between March 29 and May 12, and a total of 980 men, covering 2,084 kilometers. In one day 95 men were transported to the hospitals in that one car.

"At 2.30 in the afternoon a call came from the 'Trois Chemins' poste, and in answering it Day and Brown had a close call. While on the road to the poste, at one place in view of the German trenches, they were caught in a bombardment, seven shells striking within 100 yards of the machine. Two or three days later, Latimer halted his machine at the end of the road, and walked down to the poste with the 'Medecin Auxiliare.' Shrapnel began to break near them and they were forced to put in the next few minutes in a ditch. They were forced to lie down five times that morning in this ditch, half full of mud and water. The red-headed girls still continue to keep open their little store right near the church on the main street. Downs spent the night on the road where he had dropped out with a broken transmission. A fire caused by the heating apparatus broke out in Ned Townsend's car. It flamed out suddenly, and it was too late to save even his personal belongings."

There are all kinds of interludes in the work. Here is a Christmas note, "Dec. 25. The section had its Christmas dinner at 5 o'clock. Kenyon plays the violin very well, and Day and Downs are at home with the piano. Toasts were drunk all the way

from Theodore Roosevelt to 'The Folks at Home.' After dinner impromptu theatricals, Franklin and White's dance taking the cake."

"Car wanted for Poste de Secours No. 1, 200 yards from trenches, eight kilometers from our post. The car rocks from shell holes. Watch for the round black spots."

General Putz, commanding the Détachement d'Armée de Belgique, states: "In spite of the bombardment of Elverdinghe, of the roads leading to this village, and of the Ambulance itself, this evacuation has been effected night and day without interruption. I cannot too highly praise the courage and devotion shown by the personnel of the section."

One of the men writes: "From 3 a.m. April 22 until 7.30 p.m. April 26, five cars on duty. In those four days each man got seven hours' sleep, sitting at the wheel, or an hour on a hospital bed."

Of one sudden shell-flurry: "We stayed still for fifteen minutes, I smoking furiously, and the English nurse singing. Little 'Khaki,' the squad's pet dog, lay shaking."

Five days of continuous heavy work exhausted them, and half of the corps was sent to Dunkirk "en repos." On the day of their arrival shells came in from a distance of twenty-one miles, twenty shells at intervals of half an hour. They took a minute and a half to arrive. The French outposts at the German lines telephoned that one was on its way, and the sirens of Dunkirk, twenty-one miles away, blew a warning. This gave the inhabitants a minute in which to dive into their cellars. The American Ambulances

were the only cars left in the town. On the sound of the siren the boys headed for the Grand Place, and, as soon as they saw the cloud of dust, they drove into it.

As one of them describes it:

"We spent the next two hours cruising slowly about the streets, waiting for the next shells to come, and then going to see if any one had been hit. I had three dead men and ten terribly wounded – soldiers, civilians, women. The next day I was glad to be off for the quiet front where things happen in the open, and women and children are not murdered."

"Seven shells fell within a radius of 200 yards of the cars, with pieces of brick and hot splinters."

A French official said of the Dunkirk bombardment:

"I was at most of the scenes, but always found one of your ambulances before me."

A Moroccan lay grievously wounded in a Dunkirk hospital. One of our boys sat down beside the cot.

"Touchez le main," said the wounded man, feebly. He was lonely.

The boys stayed with him for a time. The man was too far spent to talk, but every little while he said:

"Touchez le main."

Through the darkness of his pain, he knew that he had a companion there. The young foreigner at his side was a friend, and cared that he suffered. It is difficult to put in public print what one comes to know about these young men of ours, for they

are giving something besides efficient driving. I have seen men like Bob Toms at work, and I know that every jolt of the road hurts them because it hurts their wounded soldier.

A young millionaire who has been driving up in the Alsace district, remarked the other day:

"I never used to do anything, but I won't be able to live like that after the war. The pleasantest thing that is going to happen to me when this thing is over will be to go to the telephone in New York and call up François.

"'That you, François? Come and let's have dinner together and talk over the big fight.'

"François is a Chasseur Alpin. I've been seeing him up on the mountain. François is the second cook at the Knickerbocker Hotel, and the finest gentleman I ever knew."

IV
THE AMERICANS AT VERDUN

The French have been massed at Verdun in the decisive battle of the war. So were the Americans. Our little group of ambulance drivers were called from the other points of the 350-mile line, and five sections of the American Ambulance Field Service and the Harjes and the Norton Corps work from ten up to twenty hours of the day bringing in their comrades, the French wounded. One hundred and twenty of our cars and 120 of our boys in the field service were in the sector, under constant shell-fire. Several were grievously wounded. Others were touched. A dozen of the cars were shot up with shrapnel and slivers of explosive shell.

Will Irwin and I went up with Piatt Andrew, head of the field service, to see the young Americans at work. We left Paris on July 1 in a motor car. Our chauffeur was Philibert, Eighth Duke of Clermont-Tonnerre, Fifth Prince of the name, Tenth Marquess of Cruzy and Vauvillars, Forty-fifth Count of the name, Sixteenth Viscount of Tallart, Twenty-first Baron of Clermont en Viennois, Ancien Pair de France, descendant of the Seigneur of Saint Geoire. For nine centuries his family has been famous. The Duke is a kindly, middle-aged aristocrat, who is very helpful to the American Field Service. He takes the boys on visits to some one of his collection of châteaus. He drives Piatt Andrew on his tours of inspection. He is a gifted and furious

driver, and on our dash from Paris to Verdun he burned up a couple of tires. It was a genial thing to see him, caked with dust on face and clothing, tinkering the wheel. To be served by one of the oldest families in Europe was a novel experience for Irwin and me, though actually what the Duke was doing in his democratic way is being done almost universally by the "high-born" of France. Up through thousands of transports, thousands of horses and tens of thousands of men, we steered our course to Lovering Hill's section of the American Field Service.

There on the hillside, to the west of Verdun, were the boys and their cars. It was daytime, so they were resting. All work is night work. They were muddy, unshaved, weary. A couple of base-ball gloves were lying around. One of the boys was repairing a car that had collided with a tree. There was mud on all the cars, and blood on the inner side of one car. For ten nights they have been making one of the hottest ambulance runs of the war.

It was on that run that William Notley Barber, of Toledo, Ohio, was shot through the back. The shell fragment tore a long, jagged rent in his khaki army coat, with a circle of blood around the rip, entered the back and lay against the lung and stomach. The car was shattered. The next man found him. The wrecked car still stood on the road with a dead man in it, the wounded soldier whom he was bringing back. We saw Barber at the field hospital. He had been operated on for the second time. He showed us the quarter inch of metal which the surgeon had just taken out, the second piece to be removed. He has won the Medaille Militaire.

This section needed no initiation. They had long served at Hartmannsweilerkopf in the Alsace fighting, and of their number Hall was killed. This experience at Verdun is a continuation of the dangerous, brilliant work they have carried on for sixteen months. These men are veterans in service, though youngsters in years. By their shredded cars and the blood they have spilled they have earned the right to be ranked next to soldiers of the line.

They gave me the impression of having been through one of the great experiences of life. There was a tired but victorious sense they carried, of men that had done honest service.

As we sat on the grass and looked out on a sky full of observation balloons and aeroplanes, a very good-looking young man walked up. Only one thing about his make-up was marred, and that was his nose – a streak of red ran across the bridge.

"Shrapnel," he said, as he saw me looking. "And it seems a pity, too. I spent $600 on that nose, just before I came over here. They burned it, cauterized it, wired it, knifed it, and pronounced it a thorough job. And as soon as it was cleaned up, it came over here into powder and dust and got messed up by shrapnel. Now the big $600 job will have to be done over again."

This young man is Waldo Pierce, the artist. It was he who once started on a trip to Europe with a friend, but didn't like the first meal, so jumped overboard and swam back. He sailed by the next boat, and arrived on the other side to find his friend in trouble for his disappearance.

Through the side of Pierce's coat, just at the pocket, and just

over the heart, I saw a bullet hole.

"Pretty stagey, isn't it?" he explained. "If it had been a ragged, irregular hole, somewhere else, say at the elbow, it would have been all right. But this neat little hole just at the vital spot is conventional stuff. It looks like the barn door, and five yards away.

"And this is worse yet," he added, as he took out from the inner breast pocket a brown leather wallet. Through one flap the same shrapnel bullet had penetrated. Together, coat and wallet had saved this young man's life.

"That's the sort of thing that wouldn't go anywhere," Pierce went on. He is a Maine man, and has a pleasant drawl.

Wheeler's car was shot through, the slatting ripped at the driver's place, the sides a mess. A man on his right and a man at his left were killed. The stuff passed over his head as he knelt before a tire. The boys have been playing in luck. A dozen fatalities were due them in the June drive at Verdun. This was the fiercest offensive of the four months, and they stood up to it.

We were looking west, and as we looked an aeroplane burst into flames. As it fell, it left a trail of black smoke, funnel shaped, and always at the point of that funnel the bright spark, and at the heart of that spark a man burning to death. The spark descended rather slowly, with a spiraling movement, and trailing the heavy smoke. It burned brightly all the way to the horizon line, where it seemed to continue for a moment, like a setting sun on the earth's rim. Then it puffed out, and only the smoke in the sky was left.

In another moment the light wind had shredded the smoke away.

It was 5 o'clock in the afternoon, and we had been coming from Paris at full tilt to get to the Etat Major and report ourselves. So, after watering the car and shaking hands all around, we started off, and straightway the rear left tire went flat, and its successor went flat, and for the third time it went flat. So we crawled to a village at midnight, and laid by for repairs.

At 3 a.m. we rose. There was no dressing to be done, as we had rested in our clothes. We ran out past the city of Verdun on the road going east to Fort de Tavannes. Wheat was ripening to the full crop in a hundred fields about us. All the birds were singing. The pleasant stir and fullness of summer were coming down the air.

Then on a sudden the famous Tier de Barrage broke out – the deadly barrier of fire that crumbles a line of trenches as a child pokes in an ant hill: the fire that covers an advance and withers an enemy attack. Here was what I had been waiting for through twenty-one months of war. I had caught snatches of it at a dozen points along the line. I had eaten luncheon by a battery near Dixmude, but they were lazy, throwing a shell or two only for each course. But here, just before the sun came up, 200 feet from us, a battery of twelve 75s fired continuously for twenty minutes. Just over the hill another battery cleared its throat and spoke. In the fields beyond us other batteries played continuously. Some of the men put cotton in their ears.

We ran through a devastated wood. The green forest has been

raked by high explosive into dead stumps, and looks like a New Hampshire hillside when the match trust has finished with it. The road is a thing of mounds and pits, blown up and dug out by a four months' rain of heavy shells. The little American cars are like rabbits. They dip into an obus hole, bounce up again and spin on. They turn round on their own tails. They push their pert little noses up a hill, where the road is lined with famous heavy makes, stalled and wrecked. They refuse to stay out of service.

We rode back through the partially destroyed city of Verdun, lying trapped and helpless in its hollow of hills. We drove through its streets, some of them a pile of stones and plaster, others almost untouched, with charming bits of water view and green lawns and immaculate white fronts. The city reminded me of the victim whom a professional hypnotist displays in a shop window, where he leaves him lying motionless in the trance for exhibition purposes.

Verdun lay seemingly dead inside the range of German fire. But once the guns are forced back the city will spring into life.

Then we returned to the ambulance headquarters and in an open tent shared the excellent rations which the field service provides for its workers. We were sitting with the French lieutenant and discussing the values of rhythm in prose when the boys shouted to us from the next field. An aeroplane was dipping over an anchored sausage-shaped observation balloon. The aeroplane had marked its victim, which could not escape, as a bird darts for a worm. The balloon opened up into flame and

fell through thirty seconds, burning with a dull red.

The hours we had just spent of work and excitement seemed to me fairly crowded, but they were mild in the life of the field service. They pound away overtime and take ugly hazards and preserve a boy's humor. More young men of the same stuff are needed at once for this American Ambulance Field Service. The country is full of newly made college graduates, wondering what they can make of their lives. Here is the choicest service in fifty years offered to them.

Even a jitney wears out. Bump it in the carburetor enough times, rake it with shrapnel, and it begins to lose its first freshness. More full sections of cars should be given. The work is in charge of Piatt Andrew, who used to teach political economy in Harvard, was later Director of the Mint, Assistant Secretary of the Treasury and secretary of Senator Aldrich's Monetary Commission.

As soon as twilight fell we started on the nightly round. Here was Section 4 of the American Ambulance doing hot service for Hill 304 and Dead Man's Hill. It was on this ride that I saw the real Verdun, the center of the deadliest action since men learned how to kill. The real Verdun is the focused strength of all France, flowing up the main roads, trickling down the side roads and overflowing upon the fields. The real Verdun is fed and armed by the thousands of motor cars that bray their way from forty miles distant, by the network of tiny narrow gauge railways, and by the horses that fill the meadows and forests.

Tiny trucks and trains are stretched through all the sector. They look like a child's railroad, the locomotive not more than four feet high. They brush along by the road, and wander through fields and get lost in woods. The story goes in the field service that one of these wee trains runs along on a hillside, and just back of it is a battery of 220's which shoot straight across the tracks at a height of three feet. The little train comes chugging along full of ammunition. The artillery men yell "Attention," and begin firing all together. The train waits till there seems to be a lull, and goes by under the muzzles.

We were still far enough from the front to see this enginery of war as a spectacle. The flashing cars and bright winged aeroplanes, the immense concourse of horses, the vast orderly tumult, thousands of mixed items, separate things and men, all shaped by one will to a common purpose, all of it clothed in wonder, full of speed and color – this prodigious spectacle brought to me with irresistible appeal a memory of childhood.

"What does it remind me of?" I kept saying to myself. Now I had it:

When I was a very little boy I used to get up early on two mornings of the year: one was the Fourth of July and the other was the day the circus came to town. The circus came while it was yet dark in the summer morning, unloaded the animals, unpacked the snakes and freaks, and built its house from the ground up. Very swiftly the great tents were slung, and deftly the swinging trapezes were dropped. Ropes uncoiled into patterns.

The three rings came full circle. Seats rose tier on tier. Then the same invisible will created a mile long parade down Main Street, gave two performances of two hours each, and packed up the circus, which disappeared down the road before the Presbyterian church bell rang midnight.

A man once said to me of a world famous general: "He is a great executive. He could run a circus on moving day." It was the perfect tribute. So I can give no clearer picture of what Pétain and his five fingers – the generals of his staff – are accomplishing than to say they are running one thousand circuses, and every day is moving day.

Our little car was like a carriage dog in the skill with which it kept out of the way of traffic while traveling in the center of the road. Three-ton trucks pounded down upon it and the small cuss breezed round and came out the other side. The boys told me that one of our jitneys once pushed a huge camion down over a ravine, and went on innocent and unconcerned, and never discovered its work as a wrecker till next day.

But soon we passed out of the zone of transports and into the shell-sprinkled area. We went through a deserted village that is shelled once or twice a day. There is nothing so dead as a place, lately inhabited, where killing goes on. There is the smell of tumbled masonry and moldering flesh, the stillness that waits for fresh horror. Just as we left the village, the road narrowed down like the neck of a bottle. It is so narrow that only one stream of traffic can flow through. By the boys of the field service

this peculiarly dangerous village of Bethlainville is known as "Bethlehem" – Bethlehem, because no wise men pass that way.

The young man with me had been bending over his steering gear, a few days before, when a shrapnel ball cut through the seat at just the level of his head. If he had been sitting upright the bullet would have killed him. And another bullet went past the face of the boy with him. The American Field Service has had nothing but luck.

"But don't publish my name," said my friend. "It might worry the folk at home."

We rode on till we had gone eighteen miles.

"Here is our station."

I didn't know we were there. Our Poste de Secours was simply one more hole in the ground, an open mouth into an invisible interior – one more mole hole in honeycombed ground.

We entered the cave, and something hit my face. It was the flap of sacking which hung there to prevent any light being seen. We walked a few steps, hand extended, till it felt the second flap. We stepped into a little round room, like the dome of an astronomical observatory. It was lit by lantern. Three stretcher bearers were sitting there, and two chaplains, one Protestant, one Roman Catholic. The Protestant was a short, energetic man in the early forties, with stubby black beard and excellent flow of English. The Roman Catholic, Cleret de Langavant, was white-haired, with a long white beard, a quite splendid old fellow with his courtesy and native dignity. These two men, the best

of friends, live up there in the shelled district, where they can minister to the wounded as fast as they come in from the trenches. Of one group of thirty French stretcher bearers who have been bringing wounded from Dead Man's Hill to this tunnel, where the Americans pick them up, ten have been killed.

We went out from the stuffy, overcrowded shelter and stood in the little communicating trench that led from the Red Cross room to the road. We were looking out on 500,000 men at war – not a man of them visible, but their machinery filling the air with color and sound. We were not allowed to smoke, for a flicker of light could draw fire.

We were standing on the crest of a famous hill. We saw, close by, Hill 340 and Dead Man's Hill, two points of the fiercest of the Verdun fighting. It was the wounded from Dead Man's Hill for whom we waited. Night by night the Americans wait there within easy shell range. Sometimes the place is shelled vigorously. Other nights attention is switched to other points.

"I shouldn't stand outside," suggested one of the stretcher bearers. "The other evening one of our men had his arm blown off while he was sitting at the mouth of the tunnel. He thought it was going to be a quiet evening."

But the young American doctor liked fresh air.

It was a wonderful night of stars, with a bell-like clarity to the mild air and little breeze stirring. A perfect night for flying. We heard the whirr of the passing wings – the scouts of the sky were out. Searchlights began to play. I counted eight at once, and

more than twenty between the hills. Sometimes they ran up in parallel columns, banding the western heaven. Sometimes they located the knight errant and played their streams on him at the one intersecting point. Again the lights would each of them go off on a separate search, flicking up and down the dome of the sky and rippling over banks of thin white cloud.

Star lights rose by rockets and hung suspended, gathering intensity of light till it seemed as if it hit my face, then slowly fell. The German starlights were swift and brilliant; the French steady and long continuing.

"No good, the Boches' lights," said a voice out of the tunnel. A French stretcher bearer had just joined us.

Other rockets discharged a dozen balls at once, sometimes red, sometimes green. Then the pattern lights began to play – the lights which signal directions for artillery fire. They zigzagged like a snake and again made geometrical figures. Some of the fifty guns, nested behind us, fired rapidly for five minutes and then knocked off for a smoke. From the direction of Hill 304 heavy guns, perhaps 220's, thundered briefly. We could hear the drop of large shells in the distance. The Germans threw a few shells in the direction of the village through which we had driven, a few toward the battery back of us. We could hear the whistle of our shells traveling west and of their shells coming east. To stand midway between fires is to be in a safe and yet stimulating situation. From the gently sloping, innocent hillocks all about us tons of metal passed high over our heads into the lines. If only

one shell in every fifty found its man, as the gossip of the front has it, the slaughter was thorough.

"It is a quiet evening," said my friend.

It was as if we were in the center of a vast cavity; there were no buildings, no trees, nothing but distance, and the distance filled with fireworks. I once saw Brooklyn Bridge garlanded with fireworks. It seemed to me a great affair. We spoke of it for days afterward. But here in front of us were twenty miles of exploding lights, a continuous performance for four months. With our heads thrust over the tunnel edge, we stood there for four hours. The night, the play of lights, the naked hill top, left us with a sense of something vast and lonely.

The Protestant clergyman came and said: "Let us go across the road to my abri."

He stumbled down two steps cut in clay and bent over to enter the earth cave. "I will lead you," he said, taking me by the arm.

"Wait while I close the door," he said; "we must not show any light."

When the cave was securely closed in he flashed a pocket electric. We were in a room scooped out of the earth. The roof was so low that my casque struck it. A cot filled a third of the space. The available standing room was three feet by six feet.

"You will forgive me for asking it," he went on, "but please use your pocket lamp; mine is getting low and I am far away from supplies. We can get nothing up here."

My friend handed over his lamp. The clergyman flashed it on

a photograph pinned against a plank of wood.

"My wife," he said; "she is an American girl from Bensonhurst, Long Island. And that is my child."

He turned the light around the room. There were pages of pictures from the *London Daily Mail* and the *New York Tribune*. One was a picture of German soldiers in a church, drinking by the altar.

"I call this my New York corner," he explained, "and this is my visiting card." From a pile he lifted a one-page printed notice, which read:

"Declaration Religeuse.

"I, the undersigned, belong to the Protestant religion. In consequence and conforming to the law of 1905, this is my formal wish: In case of sickness or accident, I wish the visit of a Protestant pastor and the succor of his ministry whether I am undergoing treatment at a hospital or elsewhere; in case of death I wish to be buried with the assistance of a Protestant pastor and the rites of that Church."

Space is left for the soldier to sign his name. The little circular is devised by this chaplain, Pastor – , chaplain of the – Division.

At 2 o'clock in the morning we were ordered to load our car with the wounded, one "lying case," three "sitting cases." We discharged them at the hospital, and tumbled into the tent at Ippecourt at 4 o'clock.

V
"FRIENDS OF FRANCE"

American relief work in France has many agencies and activities. I have given illustrations of it, but these are only admirable bits among a host of equals. I have told of the American Field Service. Other sections of young Americans have been at work in the hottest corners of the battle front. The Harjes Formation and the American Volunteer Motor Ambulance Corps, known as the Norton Corps, have made a name for daring and useful work with their one hundred cars on the firing line. What the Field Service has done, they too have done and suffered. It was with a glow of pride that I read the name of my Yale classmate, W. P. Clyde, junior, of the Norton Ambulance, cited in an order of the day, and made the recipient of the French War Cross. The commanding general wrote of him:

"Volunteer for a perilous mission, he acquitted himself with a cool courage under a heavy and continuous fire. He has given, in the course of the campaign, numerous proofs of his indifference to danger and his spirit of self-sacrifice."

I have shown the contribution of scientific skill and mechanical ingenuity which Americans have made in hospital and ambulance work. There remains a work in which our other American characteristic of executive ability is shown.

Organization is the merit of the American Relief Clearing House. When the war broke out, American gifts tumbled into Paris, addressed and unaddressed. There was a tangle and muddle of generosity. The American Relief Clearing House was formed to meet this need. It centralizes and controls the receipt of relief from America intended for France and her Allies. It collects fresh accurate information on ravaged districts and suffering people. It prevents waste and overlapping and duplication. It obtains free transportation across the ocean for all gifts, free entry through the French customs, and free transportation on all the French railways. It forwards the gifts to the particular point, when it is specified. It distributes unmarked supplies to places of need. It receives money and purchases supplies. It has 114 persons giving all their time to its work. It has issued 45,000 personally signed letters telling of the work. It employs ten auto trucks in handling goods. It has concentrated time, effort and gifts. It has obtained and spread information of the needs of the Allies. It has been efficient in creating relationship between the donor in America and the recipient in France, and in increasing good will between the nations. I do not write of the Clearing House from the outside, but from a long experience. For many months my wife has given all her time to making known the work of Miss Fyfe who manages the work of relief for civilians, their transportation, and conducts a refugee house, and a Maternity Hospital in the little strip of Belgium which is still unenslaved. Little local

committees, such as Miss Rider's in Norwalk, in Cedar Rapids, in Montclair, and in Douglaston, L. I., have been formed, and 36 boxes of material, and over $1,500 in money, have been given. Those supplies the Clearing House has brought from New York to La Panne, Belgium, free of charge, promptly, with no damage and no losses. What the Clearing House has done for this humble effort, it has done for 60,000 other consignments, and for more than a million dollars of money. It has distributed supplies to 2,500 hospitals and 200 relief organizations in France. It has sent goods to Belgium, Salonica, to the sick French prisoners in Switzerland. It dispatched the ship *Menhir* for the relief of Serbian refugees. It has installed a complete hospital, with 200 beds and a radiograph outfit. The cases which it transports contain gauze, cotton, bandages, hospital clothing, surgical instruments, garments, underwear, boots, socks. The names of the men who have administered this excellent organization in Paris are H. O. Beatty, Charles R. Scott, Randolph Mordecai, James R. Barbour, and Walter Abbott.

After the claims of immediate dramatic suffering, comes the great mute community of the French people, whose life and work have been blighted. And for one section of that community the Association of "*Les Amis des Artistes*" has been formed. "To preserve French art from the deadly effects of the war, which creates conditions so unfavorable to the production of masterpieces of painting, sculpture, architecture, decorative arts, engraving," is the object of this society. The members see

that other forms of activity will swiftly revive after the war. "The invaded districts will be rebuilt, business will flourish. But art will have a hard and prolonged struggle." The society purchases from its funds the works of men of talent whom the war has robbed of means of support. These paintings, statuary, engravings, so acquired, are annually divided among the members. The purchase is made by a committee composed of distinguished artists, critics and connoisseurs, representing the three great French salons and the various art tendencies of the modern movement. The Honorary Committee includes Bakst, Hanotaux, Maeterlinck, Rodin and Raemaekers. Americans who are aiding are Mrs. Mark Baldwin, Mrs. Paul Gans, Walter Gay, Laurence V. Benét, and Percy Peixotto.

The new American fund of the "Guthrie Committee" for the relief of the orphans of war has been recently announced. It is planned to raise many millions of dollars for this object.

Children, artists, invalid soldiers, refugees – there is a various and immense suffering in France at this moment, and no American can afford to be neutral in the presence of that need. The sense of the sharp individual disturbance and of the mass of misery came to me one day when I visited the Maison Blanche. We entered the open air corridor, where a group of thirty men rose to salute our party. My eye picked up a young man, whose face carried an expression of gentleness.

"Go and bring the War Minister your work," said the Major who was conducting us.

A little chattering sound came from the lips of the boy. It sounded like the note of a bird, a faint twittering, making the sound of "Wheet-Wheet" – twice repeated each half minute. Then began the strangest walk I have ever seen. His legs thrust out in unexpected directions, his arms bobbed, his whole body trembled. Sometimes he sank partly to the ground. His progress was slow, because he was spilling his vitality in these motions. And all the time, the low chirrup came from his lips. More laborious and cruel than the price paid by the victims of vice was this walk of one who had served his country.

And yet nothing in the indignity that had been done to his body could rob him of that sweetness of expression.

"A shell exploded directly in front of him," explained the doctor, "the sudden shock broke his nervous system, and gave him what is practically a case of locomotor ataxia. He trembles continuously in every part. It forces out the little cry. The effect of that shock is distributed through his entire body. That is what gives hope for his recovery. If the thing had centered in any one function, he would be a hopeless case. But it is all diffused. When the war ends many of these men who are nerve-shattered, will recover, we believe. As long as the war lasts, they live it, they carry a sense of responsibility, with the horror that goes with it. But when they know the shelling is over for ever they will grow better."

In a few minutes the young soldier returned carrying two baskets. The one thing that is saving that man from going crazy

is his basket making. Very patiently and skillfully his shaking hands weave close-knit little baskets. Some of them were open trays for household knick-knacks. Others were worked out into true art shapes of vase. I shan't forget him as he stood there trembling, the little reed baskets rocking in his hands, but those baskets themselves revealing not a trace of his infirmity. Only his nervous system was broken. But his will to work, his sweet enduring spirit, were the will and the heart of France.

The War Minister, in whose hands rests the health of four million soldiers, is as painstaking, as tender as a nurse. Fifteen minutes he gave that man – fifteen minutes of encouragement. The rest of France waited, while this one little twitching representative of his race received what was due from the head of the nation to the humblest sufferer. Do I need to say that the soldier was bought out? Professor Mark Baldwin and Bernard Shoninger held an extempore auction against each other. But one basket they could not buy and that was the tray the man had woven for his wife. He was proud to show it, but money could not get it. And he was a thrifty man at that. For, as soon as he had received his handful of five-franc notes, he went to his room, where he sleeps alone so that his twittering will not disturb the other men, and hid the money in his kit. Something more for his wife to go with the basket.

Clearing house of the suffering of France, the Maison Blanche is the place where the mutilated of the Grand Army come. As quickly as they are discharged from hospital, they are sent

to this Maison Blanche, while completing their convalescence, before they return to their homes. It is here that arms, legs, stumps, hands and the apparatus that operates these members, are fitted to them. They try out the new device. It is to them like a foot asleep to a whole man; a something numb and strange out beyond the responses of the nervous system. It behaves queerly. It requires much testing to make it articulate naturally.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.