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PARIS SEES IT THROUGH

PARIS SEES IT THROUGH

A DIARY. 1914—1919

BY

H. PEARL ADAM

"C'est beau, le formidable est sorti du frivole"
VICTOR HUGO

HODDER AND STOUGHTON
LONDON NEW YORK TORONTO
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TO

WAVERLEY

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PREFACE

"THE QUEST FOR SAFETY"

An Article Published July 24, 1914

"Within the last few weeks the earth and the waters under her and the heavens over her have all declared their enmity to man. In one country the lightning has in a moment shrivelled six living caskets of human hopes and fears, enterprises, and affections. In another, such of the earth as had been allowed by the rapacity of contractors to remain beneath the feet of men was removed by rushing waters, which received bodies of men and women and children, still open-mouthed in the first instant of amazement. On the sea huge ships have felt their way, lowing like great blind cattle, through inexplicable fogs; seeking in the dark for safety, they have found wounds for their iron sides, and a swift termination of this world's troubles for many who were still able, and even eager, to bear them. Mankind venturing into the air has been overset and consumed by a gust of wind, so that the young wife of one of the rash beings first heard his lamentable cries as he burned in the wreck above her, then saw his carbonised body at her feet. There is something the matter. Heaven rages at something, and the judgment of men is swayed from its pole like a compass in a thunder-storm. Wherein we have offended only priests can tell us, and they are all sure of quite different things.

But airships and watercraft and the proud expresses of the earth are involved in one common ruin, and one cannot but see a connection between their disasters and those more reckless and swift pronouncements made by thunder and cloudburst and the forked writing of the sky.

"It is, we all know, extremely unsafe to be alive. Our trouble is that no one has ever proved to us that it is very safe to die. We have a sort of feeling that this existence is, perhaps, only the frying-pan, after all; and our religion takes great care to preach that we may expect the fire hereafter. Consequently the whole history of the human race resolves itself into the search after safety. To this is subordinated the love of man and woman, of mother and child; the love of gain; the pride of possession; and even the lowest but most consuming passion, the love of bodily luxury. What we all want is to be safe. It is the one thing we can never have, and for that reason our very souls are set on it. It is true that we sometimes desire safety for others more than for ourselves; but it is safety we are seeking just the same.

"Men have died for honour, and women have died for love. They had exalted the notion of safety into that of an ideal. Neither could face a world in which the staff they had chosen should prove unsound. Just as devout believers who are forced to become agnostics frequently commit suicide sooner than face an existence without the religion which gave its whole meaning to the life they led, so will a man or woman give up his life in defence of an idea or an emotion —in defence of the flimsy barricade of biscuit-tins they have erected against the dark and yelling horde without. It is inconceivable that the Mind which created the universe can take much account of our notions about love and honour. We must defend

them for ourselves and pay the price of self-deception if they are proved unstable.

"On the other hand, if the universe is an accident, and emanates from no mind at all, this life is all we have, and we cling to it. We do our best to make safe the thing we believe in. This world for the materialist; the next for the devout; the inner world for the thinker and the emotionalist.

"The human spirit may be all that it is said to be—a dauntless and heroic affair, equal to facing any odds. The human body, however, which is the casket of the spirit, is unfortunately softer than the greater part of inanimate substances. Had it been harder than the earth, than iron, than steel, we might have made a show of safety in our arrangements. But there would have remained lightning and ice and fog, and the possibility of meteorites, which can go to rest in a granite mountain like a fat man jumping into a feather-bed.

"The fact is, we are searching for a thing we cannot conceive. Safety is as much outside our consciousness as some star of which we have never heard. We cannot conceive, by the highest efforts of our brains, what it would be like for one instant to have the flesh of our body safe in this world or the comfort of our spirit assured in the next. The sensation, if it were imparted to us by a miracle, would probably kill us. The nearest approach to it known to us is the ecstasy of a revivalist meeting, which usually bears an ample aftermath of lunacy on the one hand and crime on the other. Those who are strong enough to survive the feeling of being saved without losing their mental balance quite frequently go and commit some specially vile kind of offence.

"A long time ago Virgil said that the one safety of the conquered was to hope for no safety. We

did not like that. We put it down as poetry, very nice and all that, but not practical. We set about building the *Titanic* and the *Empress of Ireland*, the *Koerting*, the Paris Metro, and the Highland Railway, and when every single one of them was built the thing we chiefly yelled about was their wonderful safety. Well, their fates are as nothing in the general sum of human disaster. Some fell in and some blew up, and some were sucked down. We shall build them again, and talk more of safety and precautions. But Virgil, as safe as anybody can be, so far as we know, knew even before his last great accident that we are a conquered race, and that our only safety lies in knowing that we are unsafe, and that all that remain to us are courage and humility."

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CHAPTER I

JULY

In 1914 the people of France had decided that it could not be bothered with politics. Constant changes of Government had worried into indifference most of the people who did not want office themselves or situations from those who held it. The elections did not interest them, and when the Government found itself in the grip of another crisis, it received from the public about as much sympathy as an hysterical woman will have from a doctor who strongly suspects that she could control herself if she liked.

The only party which can be said at that time to have had a vitalising effect on the public political conscience, was the Socialist party. Under the leadership of Jaurès, it was waging such a violent campaign against the Three Years' Service Bill, that people really did begin to think about the matter, and to look at it from a general rather than an individual point of view. Not only was it borne in on the man in the street that this was a matter of great importance to the country, but it also provided him with various little material excitements, which kept alive his interest in it.

For instance, Millerand, the then Minister of War, instituted Saturday evening military marches in the streets of Paris. The best bands of the French Army went through the summer dusk playing stirring airs ; with the first distant bourdon of the drum the streets filled with the dead-leaf patter made by all the little

sons of all the concierges and the tradespeople running to the main road, and the more leisurely tread of their parents. When the band had passed, back they all came, and scraps of talk about "les trois ans" floated up to the open windows.

Sometimes the Socialists made demonstrations against these tattoos, or tried to; but they never amounted to much. The police made some arrests, the public hissed, and the tattoo continued to play "Sambre et Meuse."

The only other real interest in politics felt by the public was that roused by the Caillaux case; but that came late in July, and the scenes in March at Calmette's funeral, by the Socialists and Royalists, had faded from the general mind in a very short time. The theory so widely held in England that the Frenchman spends most of his leisure sitting in a café talking politics is a fallacy. He much prefers sitting there playing manille or chess or dominoes, and, up till the war, had for years been acquiring an actual disgust for politics and politicians.

When that wet and oppressive July broke upon us we were living in a world which, looking back on it now, seems positively fantastic! It is as droll as a cardboard farm supplied with cardboard animals and tin trees, and just about as real. The things we did, and thought, and read, were so utterly unimportant. The Suffragettes, and Ulster, were the only subjects with which our Press and our conversation were seriously occupied, although Bishops were having a tremendous set-to as to whether a Nonconformist ought to be allowed to take Holy Communion in an Established Church when he is several hundred miles from any other. Public opinion was interested, really violently interested (as violence went in those days), in the vital debate

as to whether women should or should not go to prize-fights. They went, and the question might surely have been answered once for all by the fact that one of them wrote after a Carpentier fight: "For the first time in my life I see the splendid beauty of youth's body at its best. He looks so young, so straight and clean, and white, and I am conscious, almost unto tears, of the great hope that he may win." We have had an education in "great hopes" since then, and have left behind the peculiar hot-house excitement which could render us emotional, almost "unto tears," over a prize-fight, merely because one of the participants was young and clean, and in the glory of youth.

Then there was, of course, the tango. Compared with the Jazz and its compeers, the tango is something of a minuet, and the orchestra that played it almost a Beethoven quartet. But in its day it attracted the attention of the whole world, and shocked us as our grandfathers were shocked by the waltz.

By July 1914, the tango had spread like a disease over Europe. As bridge had annihilated music, so the tango annihilated bridge as a social pastime.

A week before war broke out, I spent an afternoon at Armenonville which was typical of those days. It was hot and sunny, and numbers of girls in thin black frocks of satin, silk, chiffon, or all three, with shady hats, were collected in a canvas-shielded quadrangle outside the restaurant proper. There was no charge for admission, but tea and other refreshments cost double their usual price in that enclosure. A wooden floor had been laid, and a tail-coated orchestra discoursed the latest negroid syncopations. The trees stretched overhead, and from without came the subdued murmur of those aristocratic vehicles which used to haunt such spots at that hour. The black-

garbed girls were not in mourning; black and white were the fashionable colours that year. Their skirts were very narrow, their hats very wide, their sunshades very frilly. Here and there an English girl in white shone among the rest by reason of her simple frock and her lovely complexion. The young men wore dark grey morning coats, light-striped grey trousers, abundant ties, with scarf-pins negligently poised to the left of the main mass, and left beneath their chairs, when they came into the centre to dance, glossy tall hats with which George Robey could bring down the house to-day. Comic things, tall hats.

A very few of these young men wore blue serge lounge suits. But such suits! They were so cut, and of such serge, that they managed to take the upper hand of the morning coats, for they decked the immaculate backs of the superior beings who knew that in July you really ought to mark your sense of the waning season; to express in blue serge your knowledge of the fact that Everybody is already at the sea or at their château, and that the most exquisite morning coat in existence, from the moment when the winner of the Grand Prix has cooled down, has a slightly commercial air.

The afternoon drew on; lemon squashes followed tea, and those subtle small drinks which entail straws began to appear on the tables. A hint of freshness floated down from the trees to the dust-laden air. The high-heeled shoes of suède and velvet and satin (these materials were then dearer than kid, and consequently were fashionable; now the work-girl wears them and the Duchess demands calf) ceased to tap the improvised floor. The little crackling crush of landaulettes on gravel sounded more and more often beyond the canvas screen. The orchestra went to take its collars off for an hour before dinner, and we

all drove back through a golden haze out of which rose the enormous and solemn bulk of the Arc de Triomphe, grey as Gibraltar. Beyond it, we bowled down to the Louvre, drowned in a valley of twilight, and so returned to prepare ourselves, perhaps for a dinner and more tango at the same Armenonville.

Or perhaps a more serious entertainment awaited us. Perhaps we were invited to a cotillion. Let nobody think this entailed merely pleasure; there were anxieties attached to it. To begin with, all the new dances had been introduced, and now and then hostesses, in obedience to an impulse of reaction, cast back to minuets and gavottes for variety, or even country dances, which require very durable rouge and powder. Then modern figures were always being invented by the exquisite young men who were sought after as leaders. And finally, a disconcerting fashion of giving live-stock as favours was beginning to creep in. It is very difficult to know what to do with a live guinea-pig in the middle of a ball.

Apart from balls, the evenings could be passed in all the stereotyped ways which have earned for Paris the title of "gay." There was "Montmartre," and Montmartre required money.

It was very usual to hear comments on the enormous amount of money which society was willing to spend on its pleasures. We had not then received any real education in high prices, and imagined that life had already reached an almost unendurable pitch of extravagance. Either our imagination or our extravagance has stretched since then! When I had lived in Paris just over a year, from 1913 to the spring of 1914, I calculated that upon £800 a year one could live the same life as in London on £500—with care. During the war, the difference in the cost of living between the two cities has not changed its proportion

very noticeably. If at times we could buy eggs at the current market price, on the other hand we have had to pay from £6 to £10 a ton for coal, until rationing and a fixed price of £5 10*s*. came in—and then, of course, we could not get it.

But such horrors had not yet burst upon us. The British housewife in Paris, appalled at the prices of necessities, set herself to meet them by the exercise of every economical device she knew. It is quite absurd to look back upon one's attitude to prices. We did battle with them as though they were giants—and we really thought they were. We felt very extravagant on occasions which, could they recur, would almost stun us with their economy. Another aspect of our lives in that hectic, far-away July has also to be considered. We thought society was mixed; but we had never imagined the general fusing of classes and circles which was to be brought about by a war waged by every valid democracy against tyranny.

Looking back on that strange month of storm and heat and wind, of self-indulgence and weary search for amusement, with its epidemic of tango, its epidemic of accidents, and its extraordinary production of trivial newspaper items, it now seems clear that we were like children in a nursery, good some days, naughty other days, full of confused impulses, of which the most dominant was the impulse to do a thing because it was "good fun." And then, so often, it wasn't!

We battened on details. We discussed, in ironic vein, but not without seriousness, the saying of Major-General Davies, who on July 19 reviewed the Eton O.T.C. and criticised it for having dirty boots "and a great deal too much long hair about." He said the long hair wasn't soldier-like; it gave "an appearance of something between a civilian

and a foreigner." What would any of us give to have the members of that O.T.C. back again, even if their hair lay on their shoulders! Indeed, in the language of that queer July it is "no fun" to read its annals. Too much of that lazy, self-indulgent, but good-natured world, has gone for ever; so completely that our own part in it has ceased to seem our own.

Other items of news which interested us in those days are not lacking in irony. A new invention was announced to us under the headings: "Nightmare War. Newest Killing Devices. Whiskers which destroy Ships." The North Sea fisherman who towed a mine home by one of its horns could tell us something about the nightmare now. Then M. Messimy, the new Minister of War, began experiments in uniforms for the French Army, and public opinion was dead against him. The dark blue coat and bright red baggy trousers of the French private had been threatened before, but, like the kilt, they had a hold on the imagination of the public, and Messimy was considered a bold man to try and replace them by "light green or light blue-grey." The Paris *Daily Mail* was a false prophet but a true mirror of contemporary feeling, when it said: "It is very doubtful if the proposed reform will ever be effected."

Other topics of conversation in July were many. The statuette of Victory was stolen from the Vendôme Column. It was a curious theft, as looked back upon now. Hansi, the Alsatian artist, was condemned at Leipsic to a year's imprisonment for treason. He went to Gérardmer, and thereby caused a storm in Paris. He was accused in the Paris press of having fled from Germany to avoid imprisonment. The brothers Paul and Guy de Cassagnac, directors of the Bonapartist journal *l'Autorité* and noted duel-

lists and fire-eaters, called out several German correspondents, saying that they abused French hospitality by being constantly gallophobe.

The Empress Eugénie went to Fontainebleau, for the first time for forty-four years. We had time and feeling to spare for this incident, and yet we were far from guessing the symbolic character with which events were to invest it.

People who were watching continental affairs wrote home to say that whatever happened in Ulster, somebody ought really to think about Europe. But Europe went her way, and few watched her.

Of all the shadows which throng the misty avenue down which those far-off days passed to their doom, perhaps the only one which lived through any part of the war, and has any real relation to the life we are living now, is the memory of Humbert's speech in the Senate on July 13 revealing the weakness of French military armour. On a France engaged in amusing itself, in arguing about Socialism, in getting up early for the Longchamps review on the 14th, and in discussing Caillaux and all his affairs, private and public, the revelations made by the Senator of the Meuse burst like a summer thunderstorm, which, in spite of the season, can be as serious as it is sudden. The catastrophes of June 16, when some of the most important traffic-centres of Paris collapsed into a drain-system transformed into roaring spates, had shown us that. M. Humbert burst upon the Senate just as that storm burst upon Paris.

Patriotic feeling had been freely appealed to, if not actively aroused (as we understand patriotism now), by the controversy as to the Three Years' Service Bill. The readiness and the willingness of France to defend herself against "an enemy" had been canvassed in all their aspects by the adherents

and the opponents of the Bill. Jaurès, whose death elected him to the golden seats of the patriots, was in those days looked upon as a saviour by young men who wanted to settle down to their trades or professions a year sooner than the Bill would allow; as a dangerous, misguided madman by those who believed that France would yet have to fight for her existence; as a traitor, black in soul and thought, by those who lived for the restitution of the stolen provinces, which Jaurès regarded with perfect indifference.

Upon the quarrel fell the counter-blast of the Humbert speeches, which threw the original combatants into the background. M. Humbert stated that the organisation and administration of the Army were terribly defective in practically every branch. Forts, guns, the anti-aircraft service, the military wireless installation, were all hopelessly behindhand. If war should break out, each French soldier would find himself with three boots—two on his feet, one in his knapsack, and all thirty years old. Guns were without ammunition; Verdun could not work its wireless if that of Metz were in action; German artillery had far surpassed that of France, and French forts were out of date; while French heavy artillery was distinctly inferior to German. These statements burst like bombs in the Senate. Upon them came the dramatic intervention of Clemenceau.

In those days Clemenceau had not become the "Good old Tiger" of everybody's knowledge. He was then the Robin Hood of French politics, liable to waylay the paunchy of every persuasion as they jog-trotted on their enduring mules through the forest of intrigue and place-seeking. This independent outlaw was dreaded by everybody, and with reason, for his bow and his arrow were at the service of any-

body who appealed to his sense of justice and chivalry, but never at the service of the person who brought a fat purse with which to bribe them.

On this occasion, Robin Hood had found a cause to espouse. He did not see in the Humbert revelations an encouragement to Germany to make war, an act of treason against France; he saw in them a revelation of unsuspected weakness in his beloved country, and he sprang to her aid. When Humbert had finished his speech Clemenceau cried: "The country has a right to know how its money has been spent; we must have a reply at once." In answer to the admission by the Minister of War that in substance the allegations of Humbert were correct, Clemenceau said: "There are moments when all of us take up our responsibilities. Never since 1870 have I taken part in such disastrous proceedings as to-day. You must reply."

To say that these revelations startled France is to put the matter far too lightly. They shook her to the very roots of her national consciousness. The public, still blissfully unaware of the cloud in the political sky, did not understand the full significance of the moment chosen by M. Humbert; but they could grasp very completely figures which the Minister of War was compelled to lay before the Senate, showing the great superiority of Germany over France in every department of army equipment.

Clemenceau was right: on such a matter the country would brook no evasion and no delay. All through the rejoicings of July 14 the Senate was deliberating, and late at night it decided that the Army Committee should draw up a report on which the Senate was to debate after the summer recess. That report was never furnished. In October, when it should have been ready, France was busy with facts rather than figures.

In the course of this debate, Messimy made one remark on which in the Middle Ages he might have based a reputation as a prophet. He admitted M. Humbert's charges, but stated that much was being done to correct the situation, and added: "From now until 1919 the country will have to make a serious effort, but by that date considerable improvement will have been made."

On July 20 the Caillaux trial opened. It is difficult now to understand just the position it occupied in the mind of the Paris-dweller. It was by far and away the most interesting thing in sight. For once pretty women and politicians and journalists and ordinary people and statesmen and prigs and professional diners-out and chaperons all wanted to talk of the same thing round the dinner-table.

The whole affair was canvassed in every aspect, at every gathering, and any one who spoke of the European situation had a very short hearing. Save in official circles the French were completely oblivious of the menace hanging over them. The morning papers did speak of it, but the public is an adept at "skipping," both in novels and in news. The Caillaux trial was more interesting than any serial, and provided not only the frivolous but the political type of mind with food.

Had the war not broken out, the Caillaux trial would probably have occupied attention for weeks after the acquittal, and Paris would have witnessed a political crisis, or even a series of crises—of a gravity unusual in a city where a Government in difficulties had for years been a commonplace of existence. As it was, those who foresaw what was coming were profoundly depressed by the trial; it seemed impossible to hope anything from a nation which would put up with a justice so corrupt. France has always

allowed her lighter writers to malign her in the eyes of other nations. The "gay Paree" business is two-thirds due to the 3f. 50c. novel. But no yellow-back could have more dramatically libelled the great French people than did the Caillaux trial.

Is it any wonder that when the war broke out, immediately on the heels of Madame Caillaux's acquittal, foreign residents in Paris wondered gloomily if there were a sane French nation, healthy enough to react in a normal, if not an heroic manner, against the German aggression?

It is true that during the last few days of the trial "public opinion" had been making itself felt in nightly scenes on the boulevards. Towards the end of the week the pro- or anti-Caillaux demonstrations became mixed with similar uproars organised by the pro- or anti-war parties. By that time, nobody could overlook the fact that there was what is ominously known as "A European Situation," with capitals. The Caillaux trial, with all its sordid adventures and mean-spirited intrigues, still held the public mind, but not entirely. In "well-informed" circles (the epithet had not then been discredited by the rumour-mongers of the war) it had almost vanished from the horizon, save as a tributary incident. Home-stayers received evening bulletins: "England's optimistic. Germany's playing a queer game. France seems pretty blue." One night it was: "England's still quite cheerful; it's just possible that France is exaggerating the situation in order to distract attention from the acquittal." Every one was convinced that this inevitable acquittal would be timed for the small hours of the morning, to "avoid the boulevards."

But the boulevards had begun to wake up on their own account. The last few evenings of the trial

were enlivened by spirited skirmishes which mostly began outside the offices of *Le Matin* on the boulevard.

In the last days of July the *Matin* windows were plastered with telegrams containing the latest news, some of it from the Palais de Justice, some of it from Germany, some of it from the Franco-German frontier. In a city which could then have been divided into four classes—Caillautists and anti-Caillautists, militarists and anti-militarists—this display of news was bound to lead to trouble. Accordingly, every evening from the East came M. Caillaux's adherents and the opponents of the Three Years' Service Bill, while from the West the Royalist and pro-War groups of the town poured along in crowds to meet them. The result was a nightly shindy which usually came to a head outside the Café Cardinal, which is in a kind of valley, so far as so metropolitan a thoroughfare as the Boulevard can indulge in anything so natural as a height or a valley.

For some days these demonstrations were more bark than bite, but there came an evening when it was obvious that the Caillaux trial was drawing to its inevitable acquittal, and the European storm obviously did not mean to blow over. On that night the skirmishing and the shouting led to real trouble; tables and chairs outside the Café Cardinal were broken (the man who goes to war between his liqueur and his night-cap is apt to consider that his unarmed condition entitles him to seize another man's property as a weapon), the police were overpowered. Trouble was imminent, and was only averted by the slightly vinous good-humour of one man; but in France the good-humoured man goes a long way in a crowd, and if he has drunk a little too much he goes even further.

By this time the imminent danger of war had flung every Foreign Office in Europe, with the exception of the Wilhelmstrasse, into wild confusion. Even the fate of Madame Caillaux was interesting only to Paris. On the following day M. Jules Cambon, the French Ambassador in Berlin, showed a copy of the *Temps* to a French journalist on the steps of the Embassy in the Pariser-Platz. "Look," he said, "here's Madame Caillaux herself on the second page!" He meant to imply that the world was on the eve of more momentous things than the issue of a *cause célèbre*.

Paris was becoming more and more excited, but the populace hardly understood itself whether Caillaux or the European situation was the cause. Everybody was restless, and the streets and cafés had never been fuller, thanks to the instinct which kept everybody roaming about the Boulevards, on the chance of hearing some definite news. There were plenty of items, but none which were illuminating. The German Ambassador had not mounted the Foreign Office steps before the city knew that he was doing so; the Austrian Ambassador, too, was a centre of interest, especially after the 26th, when Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia. Discomfort in material ways was also being felt, since everybody started to hoard their gold—the first sign of panic in the French, who have never learned to trust banks, and like to treat their money as dogs treat bones, by burying it under a tree or a mattress. There was a severe panic on the Bourse, and in a day or two we might have reasonably had a new version of the old prints that announced that "Crédit est Mort!"

On Sunday, July 26, we learned by the morning papers that war between Austria-Hungary and Serbia had been declared. In our hearts we felt

that this was Armageddon, but we still talked for several days of the chance of "localising" hostilities. Our imaginations were already overworked, we were incapable of picturing to ourselves the situation which our brains told us already existed.

On July 29, Madame Caillaux was acquitted, in the early hours of the morning. The crowd had waited up, and had to be charged by the police. It did not like the verdict, and it made its opinion clear. Had there been no war looming heavily over us, Paris would have produced some wild scenes before daylight.

As a matter of fact, fortunately for the persons who acquitted the lady, Paris was suffering from a distinctly pessimistic mood. She felt that war was inevitable, and the moment of heroic cheerfulness had not arrived. She went about with head-shakings, and perhaps it was as well that some wholesome irritation was supplied by the Caillaux affair. But, of course, we had our joke; the morning papers told us that "The Minister of Agriculture is expected to-day to fix the date of the opening of the shooting season." That joke gained in value every day, until it died of a surfeit of grimness.

On the last day of July, President Poincaré returned in haste from his visit to Russia. He came back to such an opportunity as few men have had. Presidents of the French Republic are usually chosen with regard to their more comfortable qualities; there is a profound distrust of the *coup d'état* in France, and Presidents are expected to be ordinary men of extraordinary tact. Where Poincaré had left a nation which vaguely liked him, because it had no reason to dislike him, he came back to a country where every eye was hopefully turned upon him, in the expectation that he would live up to that descrip-

tion of him which was current at the time of his election: "We have at last a President who is a Man." The system which elected him was not the system which could produce the Super-man we hoped for when the war broke out; but M. Poincaré tasted the sweets of victorious royalty on the day of that return. Half Paris ran by his carriage, headed by that ferocious patriot, M. Maurice Barrès, and the heavy air reverberated with cheers. Caillaux and all his affairs were forgotten; in a unanimous impulse, Paris showed her heart.

CHAPTER II

THE ONSLAUGHT (1914)

THERE are so many impressions to be recorded of the events of those strange twilight days of the beginning that it is almost impossible to give anything like a picture without referring freely to a diary.

The first knowledge that Paris really had that war was absolutely and irrevocably upon her was the sight of battery after battery of '75 guns parked in the Tuileries gardens, where they had arrived over-night. My own first glimpse of what lay before us I obtained in the course of a hurried visit to London in search of hard cash. Nothing was then obtainable in Paris unless you could produce the exact amount of your purchase. Public confidence in the bank-note had never been a feature of the French character, and at the first breath of international disturbance (in those days people thought only of the possibility of war between Serbia and Austria-Hungary) every vestige of gold coinage fled into the obscurity of the *bas de laine* and was very shortly afterwards followed by the cart-wheel of the five-franc silver piece. Big notes became unchangeable; banks became almost as suspicious of their customers as the customers, waiting in long lines outside the premises to draw their deposits, were of the banks. On my way over to London to bring back the hard bright golden sovereigns without which we could do nothing (we could only get 23f. 50c. for them in those days) our boat from Boulogne caught sight of a long black

battleship floating in the reflected glow of the evening sun. It had a cluster of lights around its stern like a woman's ring. It was blacker than the cliffs, and looked stronger, as it slowly passed out of the coloured water of the sun's wake into the grey of the twilight. This evidence of watchfulness made everybody think, and instead of the chatter which usually accompanies the sight of merchantman and warship at sea there was completely unbroken silence.

My return journey to Paris was a foretaste of many other journeys afterwards, for on it I met my first and perhaps the first refugee from the war—a poor New England school-marm who had very unwisely chosen this extremely troubled moment in the world's affairs to spend her life-long savings in a trip to Europe. The poor soul had visions of spending happy days in Paris, followed no doubt by a week at lovely Lucerne and all the other sojourns allowed to the traveller of moderate means by the tourist agencies. Poor trusting soul! She received her first real confirmation of the alarmist but very well-founded gossip we had heard on board as to the likelihood of war, as our train neared Paris, when some tactful and excited passenger pointed out that the bridges were being guarded by troops with fixed bayonets.

The Paris I returned to was utterly different from the capital I had left but a few hours before. The effervescence of the Caillaux trial was dying out upon the boulevards and a somewhat jingo spirit was getting the upper hand. There were many things to be seen in the great thoroughfare of Paris that night, and I witnessed most of them from a vantage-point upon the boulevard near the Opéra. It was from there that I heard the fierce shouts of "Hats off!" which heralded the slowly-moving procession bearing the body of the assassinated leader of the

French Socialist party to his home. That pistol-shot, fired by an hysterical young man with dreams bigger than his brains, was the first real shock Paris received. Then for the first time to the mind of every one there leaped the possibility of civil war in the face of the invader and with that idea all the horrible pageant of disastrous 1870. The next morning the Government, with excessive alarm, had the whole city placarded with somewhat extravagant eulogies of the great leader and almost hysterical appeals to the population to keep calm. The population kept calm—so calm, indeed, that the approaches to the Quai d'Orsay, where history was being made in the rapidly recurring visits of Baron von Schoen, the German Ambassador, had at no time anything approaching a crowd around them.

No one who saw those early days of mobilisation in France is likely ever to forget the spectacle. The first notice of mobilisation was posted at four o'clock on August 1, and an hour later there was hardly a cab to be had; there were already groups of men with bundles on their shoulders marching to the railway stations or to their depots. There were groups of weeping women everywhere.

At night unwonted searchlights pried into the clouds, and the funny ovals of their smudged light were gazed upon in silence by thousands with upturned faces in the streets. The order of mobilisation practically meant the collapse of all public and domestic service. The underground railways maintained a fluttering service for an hour or so and then it became absolutely necessary to walk, if you wanted to get about the city. The whole town was on foot, lined up in front of grocers' shops, outside banks, or escorting departing conscripts to the eastern railway station. On the Sunday evening, the first day of mobilisation, the

hooligan element got to work and started smashing up German and Austrian shops and enjoying itself in a number of other illegal manners.

British subjects, during these few days, passed through moments of real anguish. News from London was scarce and hesitating. No one knew what our immediate attitude would be. More than one English tradesman removed a possibly incriminating sign-board from his shop-front and prepared to meet the worst. Perhaps the most unruffled figure in our rapidly diminishing colony was that of Lord Bertie, who, attired in a light grey frock-coat and trousers and an Ascot top-hat, could be seen sauntering down several times a day to the Foreign Office, with a green-lined sun-umbrella shading his rosy countenance from the sun. We British had more than one really awkward moment with our French friends until we finally declared war. These days were spent in wild wrangles with excited passport-seeking crowds at a very inadequate consulate, in searching for provisions in all sorts of unlikely quarters of Paris, and in bathing our ankles, horribly swollen by too much exercise. No one slept, and the rest of the time was passed in watching with wonder the countless processions which flowed up and down the boulevards all night long, composed for the most part of youths whose dreams never told them that they would live to die at Verdun. Once mobilisation was over, the police started to restore some order in the provisioning of Paris, transport again became more or less normal, censorship got to work, and Paris settled down to wait the progress of events. The capital, like the rest of the country, was kept in the most complete ignorance of the course of the war, and yet the few crazy rumours set about received no credence.

Paris became like a big provincial city; the streets were deserted at night, and a footstep on the boulevard ranked as an event. Almost the only sound heard was the curious note of the claxons of the Red Cross cars bearing wounded from the distributing stations in the suburbs.

The big shops were empty. As a rule, they are filled with a seething mob of grasping buyers and indifferent sales-people. The counters were deserted, and behind them the shop-girls sat sewing shirts and bandages for the soldiers. By the middle of August, Paris lay stifling in heat, gay with flags, which hung listless, waiting for far-distant victories to stir their folds.

On August 17, we left Paris early in the morning by St. Ouen. For the first hour we were constantly stopped at railway, river and canal bridges, as well as at points on the road, by guards with bayonets. They stood in the road and did Müller exercises with their bayonets at us in a very martial manner. At the important places they were real soldiers, at the lesser ones, and especially in lonely little villages, they were just peasants in blouses with a soldier's cap. Some of them could hardly read our permits when they got them. We were kept longest at a level crossing over a single line of railway, a line so important that I counted five different kinds of wild-flowers from the car while I sat there, that grew between the rails, and those were only the large ones, and did not include tall and waving grasses. At this place they were sure we wanted to blow up their railway, and were very stern with us, as they could not read the permit well enough to count how many people it allowed to pass. On the whole, the guards of every class were harsh and severe of countenance while they examined us; but, once satisfied, unbent

with great speed and asked for news, or took with a smile any friendly chaff about their severity.

When we got far from Paris the guard-posts became rarer. The harvest was being slowly taken in by old men and boys and women, who looked very picturesque doing it, as they stopped to look after the passing car on the road.

At Amiens we paid a hasty visit to the Cathedral, little dreaming that when we next saw it its majesty, riven with shells, would rise above a town shattered by bombardment and air-raid, soiled by the memory of German occupation.

We did not stay long, partly because the streets were so interesting. They were full of English officers in khaki, and men. Military waggons were arriving, the men decked with flowers; Army Service Corps men and nurses were all over the place, and Flying Corps men too. Our men looked very neat and workmanlike in their well-fitting uniforms, and, although they were sleepy, after four days' travelling, they were much more alert in their manner than the French soldiers. There was a company of waggons drawn up under some trees opposite the station, and a great crowd of French inhabitants were gathered round them watching Tommy eating great hunks of cheese. Several pretty girls were having a great time with the men in one waggon, while the men in the others, who were not in such luck, looked on with mock disapproval and mourned in concert their reproach: "Oh, Thomas, Tho-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-Omas!" and the fathers and the mothers of the pretty girls beamed and said, "Oh, la, la! Ces Anglais!" From what we saw it was much more *ces françaises*!

The official we had come to find had left Amiens, and gone farther north with the Expeditionary

Force. Secrecy was the order of the day, and it was merely on the strength of a chance word that we started off for Cambrai to try and find him, or rather, on the track of the army, which seemed to lead towards Cambrai. We left Amiens laughing over a talk with a Tommy who was driving a commandeered Johnnie Walker waggon. He was a reservist who had been an omnibus driver; had been in France four days and four nights, and had but one impression of the country and the people—and that was that French soldiers wore very baggy trousers!

We went back to the hotel, and had a final glimpse of the peaceful garden, with the crane stalking about, very indignant with the two foreign ducks, and every now and then opening his big clipped wings and going after them in ridiculous hops with his huge bill wide open. There is not much left of the hotel now, and all the birds are dead.

Once out of Amiens the country began to grow wider and more forlorn, with no trees, and a few mournful hills very far away. For many miles at a time one saw no houses, but distant, un-French-looking steeples stood up like masts of sunk vessels. The road was so quiet that we stopped and asked an old man if he had seen any transport waggons go by. He said Yes, more than a hundred. We felt very pleased with the detective work we had done, and sped on. Very soon we began to see signs that they had passed, for in the villages all the people were out in the streets looking up the road for more English. They waved flags and cheered us, and took off their hats, and the women threw bunches of flowers into the car. They had them all ready made-up, and when they threw their last ran into the house for more. If one caught a bunch they were ever so pleased. It was all very exciting, and J. tried to do an Alex-

andra kind of bow, which is difficult when you are sitting bodkin in a car.

At one place where we paused outside a farm, the farmer and his wife and young sister came out to us. We had stopped because our little flag had blown away. With many smiles the farmer, and the farmer's wife, and the farmer's sister, picked it up and came after us with it. The girl showed us with great pride an A.S.C. badge which an Army Service Corps man had given her earlier in the afternoon. I think she wanted our Union Jack to go with it, but she did not get it.

We ran on ahead quickly into Cambrai. There we stopped for petrol, and a huge crowd came round us, examining the car, and us, until a string of army cars came up, and did us a good turn, by removing about three hundred very hot people from our side to theirs. They were very welcome to this homage.

We drove to the barracks, where I sat in the car waiting, outside, and having a most interesting time. There was a crowd of French soldiers and civilians outside the barrack-gates, and we could hear English bugle-calls from inside; every time they sounded the whole crowd stood on tip-toe to peer through the gates, at some operation we could not see. Every now and then one or two English soldiers came out, and were immediately surged over by the French, kissed, and patted, and talked to, and appeared on our edge of the crowd bright scarlet, and with an expression of the most heartfelt shame. Every child in Cambrai wanted to shake hands with an English soldier, and for the most part Tommy knew exactly how to treat the children, although he had been so horribly overcome by the adults, and shook hands with the air of one senator greeting another, especially when the child was very small. But one man declin-

ing to be kissed by a youth of about fifteen was a wonderful sight. If he fought as earnestly for his country as he fought against that kiss he must be covered with decorations by now.

The elusive officer we were chasing had gone on to Headquarters, whose whereabouts were of course supposed to be the deepest possible secret. Four determined people, however, who mean to find a man are not easily discouraged, and it was not long before we knew that G.H.Q. was at a place of which not one of the party had ever heard, an obscure little place called Le Cateau. One week later it had taken its place among the indelible names of immortality.

We decided to go on, although rather doubtful as to our reception. Our French permit was perfectly in order, and allowed us to circulate anywhere on French territory; but we had already gathered that the British staff officer considers the ground on which he stands Britain, and does not like other people to tread it without his permission. In those days he was particularly hard and cold towards his compatriots—as one of our party sadly said, after receiving a magnificent snub from a lieutenant almost young enough to have received the spanking he needed: "I can't help feeling that nobody loves me!" However, the decision being taken that we would risk it, we started for Le Cateau, being told that the twenty-five kilometres could be covered in as many minutes. Nevertheless the first quarter-kilometre took ten minutes, for it led through the main place of the town, where seething masses of French soldiery and populace were waiting for something or anything to happen.

We had some difficulty in getting out of Cambrai, for the guards at cross-roads and railway-crossings were very particular about us. One of us had heard

that there was to be no getting back into Cambrai after dark, and we had found that there was an hotel at Le Cateau, though we hoped to get back to Cambrai by dusk.

We drove on into Le Cateau, looking for the good hotel we had been promised by a soldier in Cambrai. When we reached it, it looked like a bad one, but it had the magic word "Auto-garage" on it, so it had to do. The place was full of khaki-clad people, but we had for the moment no time to attend to them, for we were told that since two days past all the rooms had been requisitioned for English officers. It was getting dusk, and going back to Cambrai would have been difficult; moreover, we had not tracked down our quarry. Finally, a hay-loft was suggested as a sleeping-room, and the hotel people said yes, we could have that.

There was then a pause, and we began to think of food. The dining-room of the hotel was given up to officers, the private parlour of the hotel-people to non-coms, and the front café to privates. We could not feed with the officers, and as the café was the only entrance to the rest of the hotel, we could not go there; so we went into the parlour. We ate a fair dinner, served most lengthily, and accompanied by a curious wine which tasted partly of musk and partly of liquorice, and was altogether rather disconcerting. After dinner we went out in front of the café for coffee. It was dark, and the shops were all closing one by one. An old man and an old woman and a child came and sat outside the lighted baker's opposite, and suddenly the child began to cry, not loudly, but "Oh! Oh!" in a very sorrowful way. The old man gathered it up into his arms and rocked to and fro against the bright window, and the old woman rocked too, and they both crooned. The

crackedest chimes conceivable came at odd intervals down from a bulgy tower we had seen as we drove up the hill; they played long things that must once have been tunes, and the only time they struck intelligibly was at half-past nine or thereabouts, when they struck three.

Presently an officer came out from the hotel, whom we recognised at once as a very distinguished public figure in England, now General Seely. To him our party explained what it was doing, and asked his advice. He was very sure of his opinion. We had poked our way into a hornets' nest, and his advice to us was "to disperse." He added: "But if you go now you will quite certainly be shot at the first barrier"; and went on to explain that, on the other hand, a searching enquiry was to be held at dawn into the right of all who were in Le Cateau to be there at all. Between shooting at the first barrier in the dark and shooting against a wall in daylight, we all preferred the latter. Shortly after, the men of the party were surrounded by military police and practically arrested. They were released, however, on giving a solemn undertaking that they would appear the next morning before a certain officer. They gave this undertaking all the more readily in that this officer was the man we had left Paris at five a.m. and crossed half France to find! The Assistant Provost-Marshal could not understand why the condition he imposed so seriously was so light-heartedly received by the culprits. They were also put upon their honour not to try to write or telegraph to anybody that night; that also was easy, as we already knew that even the biggest personalities on the staff had not been allowed to write to their families, nor let them know that they were safe and well, so dark was the secrecy of the Headquarters we had stumbled on.

The next morning we got up to the sound of trumpets. All the men were grumbling mightily about having no razors and no clean collars, and we went out to search for them in the main street.

It goes up a hill, widening out at the top. Nearly at the top on the left is a bulgy Flemish tower—the one that has the chimes; right at the top, at the right, is another, rather different. They are both very old, and quite unlike anything I have seen before; and I am most unlikely ever to forget these! At the foot of the hill are the barracks, then British headquarters, and the street was full of soldiers—Cameron Highlanders and Scottish Rifles, and a few of the Welsh Fusiliers we saw at Amiens; but above all A.S.C. men (mostly minus their badges, thanks to the pretty girls on the road) and Red Cross men. I must certainly have been the only woman in the town apart from the inhabitants. It was a cool, bright morning, and felt very peaceful, in spite of all the soldiers. Presently we met a soldier carrying two eggs, and accompanied by a Frenchman. The one desire they both had was to make themselves understood to each other. The Englishman was trying to make signs like a saucepan, and the Frenchman was trying to make signs like a cock or a plate, in order to find out whether the soldier wanted them boiled or fried. Every time he said "coq" the soldier thought he meant that eggs were laid by hens, and, as he knew that already he was getting desperate, when one of our party asked him, "What do you want?" In another minute they were hurrying on, now trying to explain to each other that that was exactly what they had been trying to explain to each other, and when we lost sight of them they were almost as much involved as before.

At breakfast, which we had in the café, and after I

had washed at the tap, which had ministered to several very much more important persons than myself that morning, the Provost-Marshal came in, robed in sternness, and looked rather startled to find a full-grown British female present. *Le Petit Parisien* was being sold, giving the story, afterwards so famous, of a cuirassier who said, apropos of all the stories of the Prussians being hungry, that he no longer took his gun into battle, but a piece of bread and butter (*tartine*) and the Germans followed him in swarms. There was great excitement over this story, as most of the British officers present knew every word in it except *tartine*, and couldn't make out what the dickens or the devil (according to their choice of words) the beggar did take into battle with him.

The men of the party kept their appointment at the Barracks, and the elusive officer was very nice to them, but it seems that we had been in the forbidden zone since shortly after Amiens the day before! However, he evidently thought a party quite as mad as ours would be a great nuisance if detained, for, in spite of the bad offices of his second, who apparently hungered to dine upon us, he only required us to get out quickly, and not come back, which we did.

No detail of those two days is likely to escape my memory. At that time life was so different from what it is now. War was still but a name, and the tenor of daily life had not changed in essentials. One did not know anything about soldiers or military life, and had to get accustomed to speaking of "the enemy," a phrase which even the far-off South African War, which was more like a bad dream than a reality to the home-staying public, had not robbed of a religious flavour. Most of us had seen nothing more warlike than the naval and military tournament, or, at the most, autumn manœuvres. The

peasants who welcomed Tommy as he careered in every conceivable kind of motor-vehicle up the long, dusty roads of the North (persistently and good-humouredly sticking to the wrong side of the road) knew much more of war than did the ordinary public, because they had some inherited memory of many another army marching over those wide landscapes. From the dawn of French nationality onwards those desolate plains have known the march of the invader and the clash of battle. There was wonder in Tommy's face at his welcome; there was a kind of bewilderment legible in the eyes of the French officers; but the peasant of Bapaume and its district, standing by the road to welcome the friendly army, did it with the ease of an accomplished host who has done the same thing many a time before. They have placid faces, very unlike the nervous countenance of the Parisian and the fiery vitality of the southern Frenchman. They are fair, with low, broad foreheads, apple-round cheekbones with apple-pink complexions, and light-blue eyes, that do not at all resemble the blue eyes of the Lorrainer—the most wonderful I have ever seen, unless the Deal boatman can compete. In their business they are both industrious and greedy; but I do not believe that between Amiens and Le Cateau there was a man, woman or child at work on August 17 at anything more lucrative than making bouquets or tying cigarettes and chocolates into packets. At that they worked hard enough. They stood by the road in groups which frequently included four generations, and they did the honours of their country-side with a generosity and a grace which are sometimes lacking from more sophisticated hospitality. They even cast to the winds those conventions which in French life are guarded with terrible constancy. The mother and father who watched

their daughter kissing Tommy (Tommy hot, tired, dishevelled, though naturally shaven, after his habit), would three weeks before have locked her up for smiling at any male under ninety.

It was a privilege to see that welcome, a privilege highly prized at the time. But when the Retreat from Mons had cast over the Contemptibles the imperishable mantle of glory, one felt that to have been on the northern road that day, to have seen Le Cateau at the last moment before it emerged from its provincial obscurity in French Flanders to the proud companionship of such names as Marathon and Waterloo, lent a significance one can hardly express to that "run to Amiens and back"!

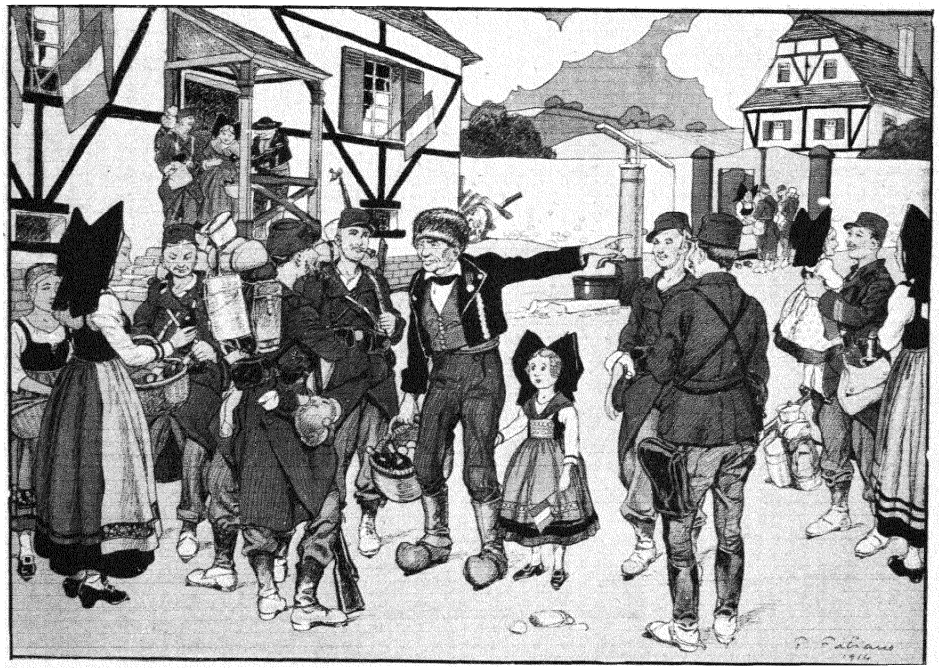
On our return, Paris was found sweltering in one of her typical August heats. The air seemed deprived of every quality that could feed the lungs. The streets were empty, and half the shops were shut. Postcard-vendors used the shuttered windows as eligible places on which to display their wares. The flags hung like dead things. One could have dined in the middle of the Place de l'Opéra. Every theatre and cinema was shut. The food panic had entirely subsided, and plenty reigned, although prices had gone up alarmingly. That is to say, alarmingly for those days. I had bought a leg of mutton on the eve of the trip to Le Cateau, and would have liked to wire back, when I found I was to be away two days, to have it cooked, since in that heat it certainly would not keep. I was anxious about it, because I had paid ten francs for it, which was excessive even for Paris; little did I foresee that the day would come when I should wonder if a forty-franc joint would be enough for four persons! I wonder what the G.H.Q. staff would have made of a telegram, had I been foolish enough to send it, saying: "Please cook mutton at

once," and what kind of code they would have invented to fit it?

There was plenty of ice in the dairies, and that was useful, for it was about the only comfort to a group of people, working hard in the pitiless heat, to have cool drinks. As a matter of fact, Paris was far from a bad place to live in in August, 1914, save for the heat. Her emptiness improved her very much, her flags adorned her, and all aliens had departed at top speed. There were no Germans and no tourists anywhere, and for the first time Paris wore a French rather than a Paris frock. As with a good many human beings, her face became beautiful under the stress of anxiety and endurance.

On August 26, I went to Boulogne by car, and could note how much had changed in ten days. All along the road were soldiers; it all looked much more warlike than it had done before. All the country we traversed then was in the hands of the Germans now, and most of the jolly-looking fellows we had seen catching bouquets and giving kisses were dead or wounded. Le Cateau was miles behind the German front, and one knew that the brutes who burned Louvain were not likely to have spared the lovely town-halls of Cambrai and Noyon. We found Beauvais full of French soldiers, and some Belgians. Abbeville was crowded with soldiers too. At Airaines, a few miles from Abbeville, the guard who stopped us asked for news. He did not know that the Germans had anywhere entered France, and was appalled to hear it. At Pont Rémy we struck any amount of soldiers, arriving by train and road, and engaged in lunching. Many of the inhabitants had brought out their lunches to share with the soldiers. Boulogne looked very empty, but quite normal.

Coming back about seven o'clock, we found mitrail-



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leuses in position by the main road. The guard wanted to know if we had seen any Germans, or if they had only been warned to be ready as a drill.

Just outside St. Denis a guard asked us to give a lift to his wife and child into the town, which we did. He was guarding a railway bridge, and she told me as we drove that they had found two Germans dressed as gendarmes one day trying to blow up the bridge. In twelve hours, she said, a hundred and forty trains full of soldiers from the eastern frontier went up towards the north.

On Saturday, August 29, firing was audible in Paris. The state of ignorance in which we had been kept for a month is indicated by an entry in my diary that " it is said that the Germans are at Compiègne." It is a wonder that the populace kept its head so well when it was left in the dark as to what was happening. The Germans *were* at Compiègne, but when one heard that by rumour, and subsequently heard it was true, naturally one wondered whether it was all the truth, or whether there might not be worse behind.

On that day I left Paris, very reluctantly, by a train which turned us all out at Rouen in the middle of the night, because it was wanted to carry soldiers to Paris.

The Left Bank station at Rouen is a black barn of a place at night, and was then very evil-smelling, by reason of its being packed with Belgian refugees. We are used to the word " refugee " now; but this was my first sight of the destitute, homeless creature with whom we have become only too familiar since. The platform, dimly illumined by those specially heartless lamps used in stations, which manage to be piercing without giving much light, was crowded with bundles and packages and people, all so mixed up that it was impossible to tell whether any particular

object was a sack or a human being cast down on the dirty floor. The people who were sitting up were all twins, whatever their ages, sex, colouring, or relationship. Misery has a large family, and they all resemble each other to a recognisable degree.

In the midst of this crowd there suddenly appeared two Tommies, in very worn khaki. At that time this was a very unusual sight in France. We spoke to them, and their tired faces brightened at the sound of English voices. We asked them what they were doing so far south as Rouen, and in reply we received perhaps the first connected account of the Retreat from Mons that was ever given. They had arrived in France a week before, Saturday the 22, and went up to "a place called Mons." On Sunday morning they had bathing orders for ten o'clock, as the Germans were thought to be miles away; but at nine-thirty they were suddenly called to get their fighting kit. By the time they got into the street shells were falling on the houses, and the people were rushing out and screaming. An old man came out carrying a woman on his back. She was streaming with blood. About twenty wounded soldiers were already being carried in, with arms blown off "and such like." At one place (they knew no names except Mons and Moreuil) they had kept the trenches and were suddenly ordered to leave them; after leaving them they were ordered back to them,—all under fire.

They said the fighting was terrific, as the German shell-fire was so hot, and the number of Germans was so startling. "They cooms on, and they cooms on, and cooms on a-cooming on." They were both loud in the praise of the Belgians, especially the women, who brought them water in the trenches under fire, and when they had given all their water went back and fetched more. An old Belgian woman, very

poor, stood at the door of her house as they retreated, offering them money and food—fourpence and half a loaf.

We asked them again how it was that they had come to Rouen. The answer perhaps holds the whole secret of the spirit which made the Retreat one of the wonders of history. "You see, mum, my pal and me one night got separated from the rest of our fellows, and couldn't find them again in the morning. But our regiment had been given orders to retreat in good order, so we went on doing it, until we struck this 'ere town, where a French orficer told us we'd better go back to Paris, and we're looking for a train." These two men, not knowing a word of the language, and without a halfpenny in their pockets, had had four days and nights which must have strongly resembled the wanderings of the early travellers of the world. They did not know whether Rouen was near the fighting or not, and had no notion how long it would take them to get to Paris. People had been very kind to them on the road, and fed them, but they were a weary pair, for they had not felt it consistent with the orders they had received to take more than an hour or two's rest by the way.

We caught a funny little train that stood in the middle of the track, and presently started without a word of warning, and with only about ten people in it. It waddled along through a sudden white mist, very cold, and arrived at Dieppe at a quarter past five, and we walked to the boat, to find it loaded to the water-line with people who arrived from Paris last night. Hundreds were sleeping on deck, in the wet white mist. We got on the other boat that was waiting, to start at midday, and although no one was supposed to be allowed on till eight o'clock, we got over the quartermaster, and were allowed

to lie down in the ladies' cabin till morning. Unfortunately we went off for breakfast, and when we got back we found a huge crowd waiting to get on. We had some difficulty in doing it ourselves, and when we finally started there were twelve or thirteen hundred people on board, and the train from Paris had not arrived!

We had a great send-off from Dieppe, with people shouting and flags dipping and sirens shrieking; though why they should have been so pleased with us when we were doing an ignominious bunk it is difficult to think. We had an excellent crossing, and arrived at Folkestone in time to see the incoming and outgoing Boulogne boats, both with only thirteen or fourteen passengers, in contrast to our own condition. London looked very normal, except that all the taxi-cabs were plastered "A Call to arms. Enlistment for War Only." Paris, empty and beflagged, seemed like a dream.

Paris was so empty in the autumn of 1914 that the end of the German advance and the beginning of the German retreat to the Aisne, could not make any visible impression on her. On the first of September a German aeroplane inaugurated a series of daily visits, dropping bombs. Anti-aircraft defence was in its infancy, but so, very luckily, was bomb-dropping. Friends who were in Paris have told me that these visits made no difference whatever to the life of the city. The people who were frightened were already showing their clean heels a long way off; the Government had been shooed away by the military before the Taube had seen the futility of bombing Paris, and those who remained were of the temper which is not to be altered by a little additional danger. On these afternoons the Champs Élysées found plenty of children playing

under their trees; and the popular caricature which represented a small girl as being threatened with not being brought to see the Taube if she wasn't good was far more literally true than it was funny. This impression of Paris is not due to the fact that subsequently we learned a great deal more about air-raids, and suffered from bombs to which the Taube bombs were playthings; it was the impression of the moment.

What an American would have thought of Paris if she arrived at the end of 1914 it is difficult to imagine. She would probably have thought that she had come to another city by mistake—a city which had changed countries. Four months earlier Paris belonged to the Americans, North and South; her shops and her restaurants, her amusements and some of her society were for them alone, and American money was the dominating factor of external Parisian life. Without a word of warning she became French. It was a commonplace among foreigners who knew her well that Paris, save for the accident of tongue, was no more France than Chinatown is America. Then suddenly she became as much French as any provincial town. She did this, not by right of metropolitanism, but by changing herself into a little *trou de province*, with all its outward signs, with all its inward feelings. The Parisian forgot his boulevards with his absinthe, and remembered only his country. I wrote at this time of the Parisians: "They are so quiet, so plucky, so removed from theatricalism. They gesticulate less, and do not talk so loud. They tell you with such well-bred composure about their people at the front that you are not called upon to make any special show of sympathy, always difficult to the English. I asked the concierge at a big house this morning: 'The sons of M. le Comte—

they are at the war?' He replied that one was a prisoner in Germany, the other has not been heard of since September 16. I said it must be terrible for Mme. la Comtesse. He replied quite simply: 'Madame se tient comme les autres,' which, with the meaning he gave the words, can only be put into English as: 'She doesn't give in any more than others do.'

"Paris cannot but be a sorrowful place to live in just now. There are so few people, for one thing. Except on the boulevards and at the circuses of main streets there are so few that one can hear a footstep a hundred yards away, a plaintive voice in ordinary conversation from far away round the corner. At night the city is more like a 'set' in a theatre than a real thing. And every one is in black, even those who have lost no one—'yet'—wear the darkest of clothes. The little boys wear military caps; half of them have the red piping hidden under crape. The flat beneath mine is occupied by two elderly spinsters, mistress and servant, from Normandy. These two women, removed by age and condition from all the closest of human relations, have lost fourteen dead and twenty-six wounded and missing between their two families, 'and from Normandy we hear ever the same thing.'

"Yet there is much in Paris which appeals to other feelings than those of sadness. British notions of French excitability receive a great shock; British notions of pluck are satisfied to overflowing. And meanwhile a lame sort of life goes on, with an air of wishing to be taken for normal. The big shops are open, and many of the luxurious ones of the Opéra quarter, too; but none of the purely trivial ones have taken down their shutters, and these are for the most part used as counters by the vendors

of postcards, some of which are very amusing, and many of which, dealing intimately with the Kaiser, could not be sent through the post to young daughters. These include some of the most amusing, which is a source of vexation to collectors. The presses are working day and night to meet the enormous demand which is expected for Christmas and the *Jour de l'an*. Broadsheet prints in crude colours of battles, murder and sudden death are also being freely sold in the streets. Restaurants may now stay open till ten, though cafés must still close at eight. Theatres may open, with rigidly supervised programmes, mostly of an appalling dulness. A mixture of Racine or Corneille and National Anthems is only attractive to the minority, and the majority will consider that their best point is that they must be over by eleven.

"The cinemas, only recently reopened, are absolutely crowded in the evenings. For the most part they give programmes arranged much as usual, with only a modicum of war pictures. Like the theatre, they have to give 15 per cent. of their takings to charities connected with the war. Great applause was showered upon a film I saw the other evening, said to represent 'British regiments, cheered by huge crowds, marching through London on their way to the Front.' It was really an excellent representation of the Lord Mayor's Show. The Canadians got a special round of clapping, and the Highlanders a perfect roar of affection.

"All the public buildings of Paris are closed, museums included. Tramways and bateaux-mouches are running, but at long intervals; and there is no longer any difficulty about getting in and out of Paris by day, for which a pass is not necessary. Food is plentiful, and for the most part prices have not changed; but meat and fuel are cruelly dear, and we are told to

expect worse. Postcard printers and cobblers are the happiest tradesmen; the former for obvious reasons, the latter because the Métro cannot take all the street traffic, and the absence of omnibuses forces people to walk, to the great benefit of their digestions, their shoemakers, and their complexions.

"The physical beauty of the town is quite startling. The sky seems to have more colours, the night more stars than ever before; the river looks wider, Sacré Cœur whiter, Notre Dame greyer, the Avenue des Champs Élysées longer. At night one realises at last why Europe raves about the Place de la Concorde. Deprived of its maddening glitter of lamps, it seems absolutely vast; its white balustrades lead away into darkness, the column of Louis Philippe stands like a grey ghost in the centre against the sky; the imagination is wholly captured, and the fact that one can enjoy a reverie in the roadway without fear, thanks to the almost vanished traffic, has also its charm.

"The Étoile district is almost empty, save for hospitals and *ouvroirs*. The sign of the true Étoilian, English or American, was that she thought the Champs Élysées were the centre of Parisian society life, and had never heard of the Faubourg. Only those have come back who want to work, and those who want to work are doing it like Trojans. The American Ambulance has distinguished itself, as its predecessor did in 1870, for the excellence of its work and the up-to-date nature of its medical and surgical installations; no one can praise it too highly.

"The King's visit to France was very popular here, and a crop of stories, more or less of the sentimental kind, has grown up about his doings and sayings. One of the nicest, improbable even among others of an unlikely nature, is called 'Le joli geste du Roi.' It seems that in the lines he 'met' four recruits of

the New Army (news for Lord Kitchener, this) all brothers, and who have been so busy fighting every day that they have not been able to write to their mother. Happening to mention this in casual conversation with their Monarch, they were delighted by his replying, 'I will do it for you!' and the very same day a letter in his own handwriting was despatched to the mamma, 'Mistress John.' It is a nice story, and illustrates the warm friendliness of the French attitude to us at the moment. They admire us and our soldiers so greatly that they are only gently sorrowful when it seems as though we thought the British Army was fighting from the coast to the Vosges, and the French Army snugly sleeping behind the lines. As a matter of fact, there is nothing, however heroic, in the annals of our own Army that has not been equalled by these gay, indomitable, fighting demons of *piou-pious*, the soldiers of the New France we talked of and disbelieved in two years ago.

"When Parliament opens, the Press will probably enjoy itself in pointing out to them the jokes about the flight to Bordeaux, which cheered Paris in the beginning of September. The favourite of these is the name applied to the Government when it removed to the South—'Tournedos à la Bordelaise.' There is plenty of chaff waiting for their public reappearance, and not all of it is wholly friendly."

CHAPTER III

ENDURANCE (1915)

THE year 1915 was very uncomfortable, at any rate in its early months. The first heroic enthusiasm was over, self-sacrifice had changed her iridescent rags for a sober fustian gown, and we felt and said that the war was "long." We looked back with longing upon the days of the battle of the Marne, when a month of anguish was paid for by five days of joy; the German took to his heels and scampered, and the *piou-piou*, in dark blue and bright red, went joyously after him. Paris stood miraculously inviolate, and took her Tauben with light-hearted indifference. Then came the talk of the "strong positions behind the Aisne," and then the days when the two armies dug themselves in and settled down to the deadlock of the winter. "The battle of the Aisne" became the "trench warfare on the Aisne." Winter came on, the situation never changed, the days were dark, and Paris was very nearly dead. Entertaining was unheard of, and if any one played the piano protests were certain to be made by passers-by against such frivolity. The price of living had gone up, though very mildly (in those days we thought it outrageous that the best beefsteak should cost half a crown a pound; I remembered that this morning (July 1919) when I saw a triumphant placard outside a shop: "Great Fall in the Price of Poultry: Fowl 5*s.* 1*d.* a pound!") On the other hand, the big restaurants had lowered their prices, as they could

well afford to do, considering the ample margin of profit they had always kept; but it was melancholy work for their clients to see them struggling along, screens shutting off half the space, no bands, Spanish or Italian waiters who hardly knew mutton from cauliflower and had never read a winelist in their lives, and half the occupied tables in the possession of people who were profiting by the lowered prices —which brought food to not more than four times what it would cost at home—to make acquaintance with famous establishments they had never before entered.

Everybody wore black, or the darkest possible blue. Tailor-mades of rigid cut were *de rigueur* all day long, and small dark hats were almost a uniform. If a woman took off her coat at dinner, and was seen to be wearing a white or blue or pink blouse, she was gazed at with wonder and resentment. Laughter in a restaurant had to be discreet, or the laugher was stared into silence. The days were gone when the thorns which crackled the most loudly under the pot were considered the liveliest company. If one went to a restaurant to celebrate some pleasant occasion, and did it in the traditional fashion, it was a wonderful sight to see the waiter smuggling the tell-tale pail to the table, and opening the bottle in a great muffling of napkins that would deaden the sound of the cork.

The public frequenting restaurants was exclusively middle-class and almost entirely respectable. In early 1915 public manners were austere, as I have said, and life was at any rate the more dignified and the more cleanly.

Early hours were the rule. All cafés and restaurants closed at 10.30. The underground stopped running very early, trams earlier still. Omnibuses were non-existent. No omnibus plied the streets of Paris from

August 4, 1914, until 1918. Londoners have had a great advantage over Parisians in that respect. Taxis have been rare and rarer, rude and ruder, as in London; but, until after the Armistice, London never knew what a real taxi-crisis was.

On January 5, 1915, Paris was declared to be out of the army zone. To the civilian mind, rather depressed, though not despondent, the announcement was almost as good as a victory. But, after all, it did not alter the fact of the stagnation at the Front. French wounded walked about the streets of Paris, cheery creatures, glad to hobble and limp along the boulevards again; and the civilian watched them with murmurs, turned and followed them, ran up to speak to them. The first one-legged soldier I saw was passing down the boulevard between a lane three-deep on either side, the citizens positively cooing with pity and affection.

Some attempt was made to be merry on New Year's Day, and a crowd turned out, in accordance with tradition, to march up and down past the little covered stalls at which toys, boot-polish, sweets, engravings, and other cheap attractions are sold. However, thousands of people in black, walking slowly up a pavement and slowly back, are not an inspiring sight, and they themselves seemed to feel it.

Some of the articles exposed for sale were rather remarkable. For instance, one stall was selling for three sous cardboard boxes containing six cardboard figures of soldiers, a cannon, and a tent, all coloured, and all fitted with steel clips to make them stand upright. They were wonderfully cheap, but the remarkable thing about them was that they wore green and scarlet uniforms, German pointed helmets, and German field-boots. No attempt had been made to change their appearance. They were roughly

executed of course—at such a price that was inevitable—but they were quite distinctly meant for German soldiers. If this was odd in 1915, however, a puzzle map I bought a year later was odder still. At Christmas 1915, in one of the biggest shops of Paris, I bought for 75 centimes a little square packet marked: "Pour Nos Poilus; pour passer le temps dans les tranchées." Within it were twenty-four board squares, printed with sections of the map of Europe on both sides. The puzzle takes about three minutes to solve, being of the utmost simplicity to anybody who knows the outlines of the map of Europe. Where it might quite comprehensibly puzzle the *poilu* for whose amusement it was recommended, is in the fact that the entire map is printed in German. One side shows Europe as the Germans hoped they could arrange it, the other shows it as the Allies presumably wanted it. The translations of the German headings are: "The state of the Map of Europe as German Michael ought to arrange it," and: "The Partition of Germany and Austria-Hungary, as our enemies thought to make it." Above these headings a few French words have been printed: "Description of the Map of Europe as the German Kaiser wants it," and: "The Intentions with which the Germans credit the Allies when they are victorious." These two phrases could hardly wipe out the significance of "our enemies," and the map is incomplete, two rows of blocks being absent, and two border-lines which doubtless bore the name and address of the German publisher. This, of course, was a very clumsy business, but one wonders how far German commerce was still penetrating France, and by what complicity the flimsy French veil was blown over it. The two maps have no importance, though they are amusing. "German Michael," for instance, wipes Belgium

from the map; Great Britain becomes a German, and Ireland an Austrian, colony; France, save for a wee patch in the Pyrenees, becomes Germany; Switzerland and Italy remain, but the Balkans, save Rumania, sink their quarrels in Austrian nationality, while Russia, so far as the incomplete map goes, is confined to the Crimea in favour of the Dual Monarchy.

"Our enemies," of course, have other ideas. "Frankreich" runs far east, Belgium and England eat up all Holland save a patch round Amsterdam, and all Northern Germany. Germany is left a half-moon between Russia and Bavaria. A Greater Serbia and Russia account for all the rest of Europe, except Italy and Spain. In both maps, Spain, Switzerland, and Scandinavia, are left alone, also Italy, which suggests that it was printed before she came into the war. But quite apart from the details of the maps, one is left wondering at the audacity or the simple-mindedness which could place upon the Paris market such a "toy" as this. At the best, it was obtained from a neutral dealer; at the worst, it had come as straight from Germany as did some of the early postcards sold in France honouring the exploits of the French troops!

Theatres were practically all closed in those days. A few of them gave special *matinées*, in aid of war charities. Madame Chenal sang the "Marseillaise" at nearly all. After some time she did it in a mechanically dramatic fashion, but early in the war she was magnificent. She was nearly always listened to standing, and that in itself was a tribute in France. She did not disdain to be theatrical—wore a white Greek robe, an Alsatian bow with a tricolour cockade, and when she lifted her arms her dress became a French flag. She also carried a tricolour. She kissed

it. At the end, she rolled it round her, and drew from the folds of her dress a sabre encrusted with jewels which she held aloft while the curtain fell. But how she sang! How she sang! The theatricality was justified, her voice carried it on wide wings into a region where even stage-properties were sanctified. An American observer, a man of deep feeling combined with much cynicism, said of her: "All the best of the past seemed concentrated in her; and this glorious woman, her head held high, was looking into the future." In the dreary first months of 1915, Chenal was to her hearers what the earth was to Antinoüs.

Paris had hitherto not been very dark, but stricter orders about lighting came in during January. London was still rather sceptical as to air-raids, and those who saw in the first orders that she should darken her windows an omen of bombs to come were laughed at. I was in London when the first order was given. It asked us to darken our windows for a few nights because "experiments" were to be made in the air. A refugee from Paris knew what to make of that phrase, but London has the docility of a lamb as well as the heart of a lion, and she accepted the notice at its value. Paris, however, knew that in the language of to-day, she was "for it," and lights were accordingly darkened. This month also saw the funeral of the *heure verte*. Absinthe had been forbidden in France since very early in the war, but the prohibition was made permanent early in 1915, by a vote of 481 voices to 52 in the Chamber.

A much less respectable innovation was that of the dressmakers, who were alarmed by the campaign in favour of economy, and thought fit to alter in every respect the outline of their female clients. Clinging skirts changed to the most abundant flutings, small

hats to large, severe lines to complicated ones. Now, territorial dress is very easily worn in Paris. You can walk through its streets dressed as a Moor, or an Afghan or a cowboy, or a zingara, or a frau, or a belle from the Solomon Islands, without being at all incommoded by the attention you receive, which will either be well masked, or else obviously based on casual interest. But a western woman of the educated class cannot walk in Paris dressed in fashions Paris has discarded. That is an outrage. She will be hot with shame before she has walked half a mile. Smiles, stares, and scorn, are her portion. When the dressmakers decreed a change from narrow clothes to wide, they knew they were making sure of their turn-over for the spring of 1915. Later on, they would have been drummed out of town for such a manœuvre ; but we were new to war in those days, and had had no experience of profiteers. Many a Frenchwoman watched the troops come home in July 1919 in the garments she bought in March 1915. But we could not foresee the education which awaited us in such matters ; and at the time we bought stuffs and sent for dressmakers, in order to have garments in which we should not be conspicuous.

Weather began to be important in Paris. Not only did fogs come to plague us, but little by little the *communiqués* acquainted us with the fact that too much rain stopped an advance, too much wind prevented ærial observation, and mud or extreme heat alike prevented fighting. Those were days when our war-education was in the Kindergarten stage.

They were not easy days for the resident in Paris. Many misunderstandings were in the air. The enthusiasm for the B.E.F. of August and September had given place to wonder and to criticism. Our propaganda service was still in the womb of time,

and it must be admitted that even when it was delivered it was never a healthy child, and was swaddled far too closely in red tape. In early 1915 we were without even the means of explaining to the French what England was doing, and many of them thought she was doing very little indeed. It was a period of stagnation at the Front, and at such times it is quite natural for the public to wonder why somebody does not do something towards getting ahead. Britain and France stood alone; Italy was still neutral; what remained of the Belgian Army could do no more than stand up to its knees in Belgian water defending the Belgian soil beneath. Our new armies had not arrived, and the cheerful cries of "To Berlin!" had died away on the slopes of the Aisne. It was a period of waiting, and the anti-Britons of France found it very useful.

There was one thing which had prepared the way for them, and that was the Anglo-German fraternisation on Christmas Day. Long before the Pope had suggested a Christmas truce, the idea had occurred with the force of an emotion to thousands of people. It seemed impossible that this awful phenomenon of war should continue through the hours of Christmas Day. Then the Pope voiced that feeling, and Germany rejected it. It is doubtful if France felt very strongly on the point, but she would certainly have readily agreed to a general truce. That having fallen through, she was by no means able to understand the spontaneous fraternisation between the German and the British trenches. She herself does not keep Christmas so much as New Year, and this hand-shaking and carol-singing, coming upon her in a moment of depression, turned wonder into irritability. In the provinces, the average man took it for granted that we had obligatory service at home, being unable

to conceive a country's existence without it. Therefore, the situation seemed miserably clear: Britain has many men available; few are here; those that are here shake hands with Germans; nothing is happening on the Front; if Britain had more men here they would make an offensive; she has many available—and so on, *da capo*.

Later on, we had a propaganda service, which did much, out of the sheer vigour of its workers, for it was practically strangled at birth by officialdom. But neither before nor after the organisation of this service, have France and Britain ever been brought to understand the main point of view which moves them. Britain has never for a second understood what such a memory as that of 1870 means in a national consciousness, nor how the actual presence of an enemy on one's worshipped soil can change every process of thought, so that the anti-militarists of August 1 were dying in uniform, crying "Vive la France!" before a week was out. France has never understood the effect of *not* being invaded. When, in moments of national crisis, and threatened national humiliation, France read and heard of dancing and music in London, of crowded theatres, of brightly lit restaurants, of low-cut gowns and white waistcoats, diamond necklaces and pearl studs, she was utterly taken aback. She supposed that such a people must feel nothing, and she went on to say, bitterly, that it was no wonder that they sat in idleness along their little bit of the Front.

So long as the Channel flows between Dover and Calais, the French and the British will be bewildered by one another. At a time of mourning, the most outspoken Briton will merely write to his bereaved friend: "Keep a stiff upper lip, old chap; but it's damned bad luck, I know." The Frenchman writes:

"Weep, dear friend, relieve your overcharged heart; I weep with you." If they meet, the Briton hits his friend, or shakes him; talks about the weather, and, if he feels capable of saying anything at all (of course after the other has opened the subject; otherwise it would be even more unkind than difficult to do so) says: "Of course we're all fearfully sorry, don't you know, and all that. You must know that. *Fearfully* sorry." The Frenchman, meeting his bereaved friend, is forced not only by natural feeling but by convention to shake him warmly by the hand, or kiss him, according to the closeness of their acquaintance, and tell him in really moving terms how his heart aches for his great loss, and what a dear fellow his boy was and what a dreadful blank his death must have left in his father's heart.

Over and over again this gulf between the two nations in emotional matters, which are just as important to the hard-headed, expressive French as to the sentimental, inarticulate British, has been made clear, and yet no one has had the enterprise to see if a bridge could not be thrown across—a bridge not made of compressed red tape, academic lectures, and communicated articles, but a bridge in which the Wish to Understand and the Wish to be Understood cast themselves into the void, in the sure hope of being met from the other side.

That has not been done. I have seen the misunderstanding and the ignorance of 1915 repeated over and over again: I have seen the wrong man starting out to do the right thing, and the right man half heart-broken at being deputed to do the utterly useless thing; I have seen the men who knew what was wanted passed over, and the men who were put in charge warned against the very men who could have told them what would be useful; I

have seen propaganda officials who physically winced at the word Publicity, because they really did think it a vulgar word; there have been moments when it seemed that Britain was by her own reserve and modesty as much doomed to failure as the "decayed gentlewoman" who took to muffin-selling, and, on first ringing her bell, cried out, "Oh, I hope nobody heard me!" In 1915 France was not really so much dissatisfied with the British as "disgruntled" in herself; but we let her remain mystified by us, and when we came and gave lectures on British Policy, or Our Past, Present, and Future in the Coral Islands, we overlooked entirely the fact that we would have been better employed in telling her why we don't mention our feelings, and why we are embarrassed when she mentions hers. We never mastered the art of propaganda, and we realised the fact acutely when the Americans arrived and gave a masterly demonstration of how the thing should be done.

If life was rather dreary in Paris in those days, it was largely because we took very little interest in ourselves. A couple of Zeppelin raids were not sufficient to make us turn our thoughts on Paris and her citizens. The chief amusement of the day-time was the newly-opened war Museum at the Invalides, where enormous crowds gathered to see the trophies that poured in, and a new propeller, another half-dozen German helmets, brought back the same people who had already learned the Museum almost by heart.

Our first Zeppelin raid was on March 21, and caused great excitement but no panic. Many people slept through it; others heard the fire-engines tearing through the streets to give warning, and thought it was merely a fire. Lights were very quickly extin-

guished, with the exception of many in top-floor rooms. The servants in every house had been told, as soon as they heard the warning, to put on something warm and hurry downstairs without a moment's delay. This they did, but they rather naturally turned on a light to dress by, and in many cases forgot to turn it out, with the result that the approaching Zeppelins were received by a kind of cave-illumination! We knew little as yet about air-raids—the official *communiqué* on this occasion mentioned the exact spot in which each bomb fell; there were no casualties to report. Later on, we all learned much more about darkness and secrecy than we had ever dreamed of.

As in England, for the first year or two of the war, every one was rather shame-faced about going away for holidays. Still, if Destiny would not call one to the trenches, it was obviously no use taking to a sick-bed, and a spring holiday this year at Monte Carlo was an interesting experience. It was certainly a change from the war-charged atmosphere of Paris. People had an air of saying, "What is this talk of trenches and guns? Is there a war anywhere? If so, why? But no; on second thoughts, the question is erased; the answer might be long and boring. Oh, of course, Europe is at war; but twenty-four turned up six times running this afternoon, and the exasperation of not being on it is enough to drive anything out of one's head. The croupier said one might have won a million francs."

At Monte Carlo if you walk one kilometre in any direction you will be in the sea or in France. In 1915 you had to have a safe-conduct first for France. The sea was your own business. In France there was war. In this neutral State there were the tables. Talk about the Germans was confined to the slack

moments before dinner, but only until some one else came in to be talked to, so that the conversation went thus: "Eighteen thousand, was it, in one week? Well, I thought there'd be heavy casualties. Talking of heavy losses, I had a louis on thirty-five. . . . It does seem a bit slow, doesn't it, getting them out of France? And these atrocities—Hallo! Done any good at the tables?"

In this pocket principality one expects perhaps a pocket-thought on the part of the natives; but anything more utterly pocket than the queer conglomeration of people who go there—queerer than ever then because thinned out by all this trench-and-gun business up north—could not be imagined. They are the last word in parochialism; but the table is their parish pump and the croupier is the beadle. The season was nearly over, but "Pleasure as usual" was our motto, and we lived up to it with energy and ardour. The queer pleasure of gambling! We work hard at it, while the ball clicks round and we watch it as Père Joffre up there watches—but it is bad taste, perhaps, to mention the war. God and Père Joffre, and what he stands for, and death, and all those real things—what dreams they are beside this fantastic affair of numbers and a little white ball!

Outside the rooms round the sand-heap, exquisitely dressed children play with spade and bucket. This sand-heap is the most cynical affair in this cynical jewel of a place. Who shall say the children are neglected while their mother gambles? No one; this sand-heap in the garden proves that Monte Carlo is really a delightful seaside resort for children. "Must take the boy to Monte Carlo—rather a bore, but it does him so much good." Their clothes and the provision of the sand-heap are, of course, sufficient distinction between these children and those

others who may be seen outside public-houses in the Harrow Road waiting for their mothers. Children are not allowed in either the Blue Lion or the Monte Carlo Casino.

Meanwhile, as the guide-book says, "Monte Carlo, if it were not for its unpleasant associations, would make an excellent health resort." True. The sea of Ulysses spreads below; the mountains where the Phœnicians built rise behind; the air smells of flowers, and sunset has new colours every day. But silence of nature and thunder of guns are alike subdued by the rolling white ball. We make our game; we wait till nothing goes any more; we rake in or are raked, and then we go home and replay our stakes over the dinner-table. How pleasing if John Knox and the Grand Duchess might be brought together in the big room one night, and how we should all sympathise with the lady!

But perhaps, although we might have supported his eloquence, we should really have felt quite uncomfortable if silent Père Joffre had passed among us one day, regarding us. For after all, the open Casino, hung upon the skirts of France, was that April singularly like those few French widows, all crêpe and eagerness, who played at the tables.

When we got back we found Paris fuller of soldiers than she had been up till then. They wore at least a dozen shades of blue, for experiments were being made as to the most invisible tint, and from blue-grey down to sapphire the *poilu* coat rang all the changes. For a while, the official choice fell upon "Joffre" blue, a curious colour formed by interwoven threads of red, white, and blue. Finally, "horizon" blue came to stay, and when the *poilu* was thus dressed, and his red, baggy trousers had turned blue also, we had to change our method of

speaking of those "pale-blue soldiers," the first to wear this colour, who had ensconced themselves in comfortable office arm-chairs. In a very short time, when it was discovered that horizon blue faded to grey after exposure, an appearance too spick-and-span became a reproach. An amusing story was told of an extremely clean, polished, brushed, new-looking sergeant, who resented the apparition in the Paris Underground of a *poilu* in faded clothes hidden under dried mud, not shaven, and generally unkempt. The sergeant sternly asked him since when he no longer saluted? The soldier replied: "Fancy thinking of that still! You won't, when you've been seven months at the Front. However, here's my reason!" And with one sleeve he rubbed sufficient dust from the other to show a Captain's stripes!

Although Paris was no longer in the war zone, many military rules dominated her life. At night, nobody could leave the city without a pass, nor come into it. The market-carts at early morning were very carefully searched, and any motorist wishing to take his car through the gates after dusk, without having papers on him to show proper reason, was immediately an object of great suspicion. He not only did not succeed in passing the gates, but had to submit to a searching verbal examination. Another rule forbade the promenader in the environs, who might wish to return through the Bois, to bring in bouquets of flowers plucked by the wayside, without a permit. The official document issued to those forethoughtful enough to provide themselves with one ran: "Let pass M . . . in the Bois de Boulogne, with a bouquet."

In May and June, Paris began to wake up a little, and, like anybody else suddenly roused, did not show herself in her best mood. Frédéric Masson, writing

about her new activity, which he did not find admirable, cried, " Give us back our grave, serious, magnificent, silent Paris of the autumn." He could not foresee how feverish this war-life was to become.

Beneath it all, of course, beat steadily the great pulse of charity, and endurance. There was scarcely a street without its hospital, its work-room, its depot of necessities for the combatants or their families. Canteens abounded, where good meals were served for a few half-pence. In some of these canteens, situated in the quarters most affected by artists, there was at least once a week, thrown in with the five-sou dinner, by some of those partaking of it, a programme of music and drama far above the ordinary concert-room level.

There is a high house, improbably adorned with large heads of owls in green plaster, which hangs upon the very lip of Montmartre, and looks into Paris almost as exactly as if it were an aeroplane. In the basement of that house have gathered every night artists of the quarter hard-hit by the war: painters, musicians, their families. In 1915 they paid twopence-halfpenny for a meal of soup, meat, and vegetables, cheese and bread. Since then I believe the price has changed, and I know they are requested to bring their bread; but they still pay a tiny price for a substantial meal. At that time, it was considered unpatriotic to listen to music or to think about painting, and artists who were not mobilised had a hard struggle.

On Saturday nights an entertainment followed the dinner, and I am quite sure that nine out of ten people, suddenly transported to that room, would have decided that a cinematographic company was rehearsing a reconstitution of *La Bohème*,—and hopelessly overdoing it. The company sat round a long trestle-

table, and most of the women and girls had work of some kind before them. Mimi and Musette nearly always knitted. A tall man in a brown velveteen coat, with a head three-quarters bald, and a mane of curly grey hair hanging from the rest of it to his shoulders, drew sketches in charcoal on the table. A hunchback, with a pale face and fanatic, blazing dark eyes, sang to a huge stringed instrument of obsolete shape an old song about his *belle Hélène*. An extremely melancholy-looking young man stood on the table and recited in pathetic tones a story turning on the pronunciation of the English in speaking French, and the company, realising that the joke was against the strangers present, first turned to us with a candid grin of apology, and then gave itself up to the utter enjoyment of some of the best fooling I have ever heard. The low room was lighted by two overhead lamps, which showed up the strange faces, the tired wives and neat Mimis, with their industrious fingers. It was more Mürger than Mürger.

The problem of what to do on July 14 was not an easy one to solve. The pride of France would have been wounded had she been prevented by her enemies from keeping her national festival at all, yet she was certainly in no mood for rejoicing. Some one with imagination finally suggested the bringing to Paris of the ashes of Rouget de Lisle, and laying them in the Invalides. The idea was given the reception it merited. The sarcophagus was brought from Choisy-le-roi, and, under the Arc de Triomphe, placed on a gun-carriage dating from the revolutionary wars, while thousands of voices were upraised in the hymn which made the young soldier immortal. It was a memorable day, a beautiful and solemn occasion, which made of the Arc de Triomphe and the Place de l'Étoile an altar standing in a cathedral.

The summer passed over slowly, with public opinion fixed on a plane of sober confidence, from which only now and then did it slip. The Welsh strikes caused some depression. They were put down by the French to successful German propaganda, no other explanation being thinkable in this country. M. Latapie's interview with the Pope, in which the Pontiff declined to make any statement with regard to German atrocities in Belgium, was followed by a rather feeble explaining away; but the explanation came too late. The interview had completely quashed what had seemed to be the beginning of a revival of religious spirit in France.

The entry of Italy into the war caused a passing enthusiasm, which did not vanish when it became silent, but was merely waved to its place in that sum of our thoughts which formed a background to our sense of waiting. On August 5 the Chamber met to receive a message from the President. Deschanel brought the whole House to its feet, in a tumult of cheers, by his affirmation of certainty that France would have victory.

This was the anniversary of another wonderful meeting of the Chamber—on August 4, 1914, when so noiselessly it assembled that those best accustomed to the ways of deputies could hardly believe in that soul-filling silence. Both in 1914 and 1915 the only interruptions to the speeches were cheers, and great unanimous shouts: "Vive la France!" President Poincaré will perhaps be best remembered in history by three phrases in his messages to Parliament on these occasions. The first was his appeal for unity in face of the foe, an appeal which followed well on Deschanel's remark in his tribute to Jaurès: "Henceforward there are no opponents; there are only Frenchmen." For over a year Poincaré's "Union Sacrée" did,

with only minor interruptions, rule the many and warring worlds of French politics. He ended that message of 1914 with seven words which moved the whole country: "Haut les cœurs, et vive la France!" A year later, no longer in the vague state of heroic enthusiasm which had swept the country in face of brutal aggression, he found a phrase which equally well fitted her mood: "France means to conquer. She will conquer."

The Chamber was united as to the war; but sometimes divided as to methods of winning it. After a time Parliament insisted on sending delegates to the Front, after the Revolutionary plan, and generals in the field had to put up with it. The plan did much harm—the story of how much will perhaps one day be told. Deputies who had never heard a gun fired in anger save in an abortive Zeppelin raid naturally could not understand anything about that hell which was the Front than that it *was* hell; and they said so and wired it home, and telephoned it, and came back and upset the spirits of the Chamber with the news that it was so, and even the French victories in Champagne in September did not wholly cheer them. These victories, fine as they were, did not elate the public beyond the bounds of common sense. A quiet joy distinguished the general attitude.

Parliament was getting restive. It had found Allied diplomacy in the Balkans faulty, and Serbia's critical situation they put down to this cause. Viviani's vague explanations were listened to in silence, and Delcassé resigned that evening and Viviani next day. Briand formed his Cabinet, and floated it into popularity on the phrase "Peace through Victory." This was the first step towards that final Cabinet which, in conjunction with unity of command, brought us to victory, and it was immediately fol-

lowed by a move in the direction of unity—at last, after sixteen months of war, an Allied War Council was formed.

A German peace offensive was launched in the autumn, but the French victories in Champagne had made it more hopeless an enterprise than ever. It was replied to at the end of the year by the French Senate's vote that eighteen-year-old conscripts should join on January 5, and by Mr. Asquith's pledge of obligatory service for unmarried men. The latter caused much delight in France, and created a glow of pro-British feeling which had been cooling since our long inaction on the Western Front.

Up till now, it had been very difficult for any civilian, and especially any woman, to get leave to visit the old Front, and to learn the new meanings of the word "desolation." I was fortunate, this autumn, to be allowed to visit the valley of the Marne, and I shall never forget that first glimpse of the footsteps War leaves behind her.

"About the silence of a great mediæval ruin, such as Fountains Abbey, or Heidelberg, there is something both impressive and peaceful. Pompeii and Babylon are wrapped in a silence almost too august to be peaceful, but certainly not painful. We take an emotional pleasure in the stillness of these ruined works of man; a gentle melancholy, perfectly compatible with an appetite for lunch, steals over us, and we feel that we are very sensitive to beauty and to death, and mustn't miss our train back. Some enterprising people are trying to run that sort of excursion to the battle-fields of the Marne, but the French Government does not much like the idea. This is a pity. It would do the ordinary tourist so much good to be plumped down into a place where everything he saw hurt him. And the most hardened tourist—nay,

the most experienced journalist, who has read for a year any amount of description of ruined villages and German atrocities, and supposes himself absolutely impervious to any acute emotional impression, will find himself over head and ears in the most uncomfortable sensations if he go to Vassincourt or Revigny. The silence there is extremely unpleasant. It is, as it were, raw. It has no majesty, no dignity. It does not appeal to any historic sense. It gets you under the belt in an indefensible manner. In the language of Tommy, it fair upsets you. In Vassincourt there remains of one home a corner of a mantelpiece, with a penny glass ink-bottle, unchipped, standing on it. Of another, there are two geraniums on an upper-window ledge, supported by the minimum of bricks. One of them has a green leaf. In a third, through a painted tin coffee-pot whose inoffensive bottom was removed by a stray scrap of shell, a very large and burning poppy has raised its head. In yet a fourth, the owner has revisited it, and out of the pile of stones which once formed that solid-seeming shell, his dwelling, he has made a flat altar, on which to place the battered brass face of his clock, which was struck silent at twenty-one minutes past two one afternoon, since when it has had no duties. And Vassincourt was a small, rather ugly place, where nobody of any importance lived, just one village out of many.

"The road has been carefully cleared, of course, for military purposes. Your car goes gently and almost noiselessly. You can hear wasps, and the sulky '*phtummm*,' which is big guns. And after a few kilometres you come suddenly to a wood which rings and rocks with the noise of children. Children singing, children shouting, children crying, children falling, children running, and children opening their mouths and making the loudest noise they can just because

they feel like it. It is like waking up after a nightmare and hearing birds in an orchard. This is the medicinal spring of Sermaize, and its hotel has been taken over by the Society of Friends for one of their depôts. Last September it occurred to the Quakers that Nature has no care for such trifles as battles, and was pursuing her way, quite unconcerned, with the young wives of France. So they came and started three maternity hospitals, and saved the lives of heaven knows how many babies, and the reason of just as many women.

"Then they turned to other matters. They looked on ashes and conceived the phœnix. They saw a pile of stones and imagined a wheat-field. They heard war and dreamed peace. In the midst of death they were in life. So they collected stones, and babies, and wood, and old people, and saucepans, and agricultural machines, and carpenters, and *curés*, and rabbits, and seeds, and schools, and clothes, and nurses and nails, and money, and architects, and Government officials. And they planted them all, and they have all begun to grow. Meanwhile, they avoided religious difficulties. Anybody who knows France would suppose that that alone was twelve hours' a day work for a strange sect. The peasant thinks they are a new sort of Jesuit, or something of that kind, and the *curés* have decided that the matter had better be left to God, for the moment anyhow. The Government officials have waited for the *curés* and the peasant to protest, and have meanwhile said: 'You will naturally give no religious instruction in your schools. Will you kindly distribute the State funds for us?' And the Army has lent the society soldiers who are carpenters to work in the shops, where they make the square wooden huts that are sprouting up inside the ruined houses of the Marne.

"The two hundred miles of straight white road from Paris to the East run through sparse country. For very many miles at a time there is absolutely no sign of humanity in the whole wide prospect, (save for a way-side grave or two, with the flag of France or England on it and some fresh flowers), except where the phœnix has been coaxed to life by the Friends. A scattered dozen of huts here, another few there; the 'Café de la Renaissance,' six foot square of new pine; a harrow belonging for to-day to one farmer, whose neighbour will have his turn to-morrow, and some one else the next day; cabbages and potatoes growing; a man singing the unquotable song about the beloved Soixante-Quinze gun, which the *poilu* has fitted to the tune of 'Marguerite,' and, above all, that wood that brims and tumbles over with babies,—these are the outward signs of the work done by the Quakers. In conversation other things appear. There is a tranquil lady who motors into Rheims now and again and fetches a few more children from under shell-fire. There are various gentlemen, prevented by their vows from fighting, who know as much of battle-fields as any soldier, and have this advantage, that they are not encumbered with arms on those occasions. There are about ninety helpers, and they all get up at five or some unknown hour of that sort and work hard till eight or nine in the evening; with two picnics and one real meal a day. Meanwhile, half a mile away there are homes and people living in them, and working, and earning their living. There are peasants tilling the soil, and there are the old folk sitting calmly round the tinkling spring in its stone basin, and young people actively laundering, and ironing, and baking, and all the rest of it. And the quiet grey Quakers are everywhere, with little time

to tell you what they have done, but any amount to plan doing more."

In a note made at this time it appears that "it has been officially announced that in a few days films dealing with the life of the British Army at the Front will be available for use in English cinemas. The idea, though excellent, is not new. The French public has for many months past been shown a magnificent series of films, at the rate of one or two a week, taken by permission, and shown with the sanction, of the French authorities. It is a pity the thing could not have been done sooner in England; it could not have failed to stimulate recruiting both by its direct influence on young men and by its educative value as regards the general public. The scenes in the trenches, the actual artillery bombardment, the different kind of shells bursting in the hidden enemy trenches on the opposite hillside; the merry, good-natured life in dainty log-cabins or ingenious dug-outs; the aspect of a ruined village; the faint blur on a far hill, seen from a trench, which is Metz, the longed-for; the making and inner nature of munitions; a concert behind the lines,—these and a thousand other details enlighten the public mind when shown to the physical eye, as no amount of writing can ever do. What can we know of grenade-throwing, for instance, by any description, comparable to the immediate and indelible impression made by the actual sight of a grenade-thrower, the nature of his weapon, the use of it, and its effect?

"The French Government films are stated to be part of the collection of those 'destined for the archives of the Ministry of War.' They are all censored before being shown, or, rather, are rigidly selected from the far greater number in the hands of the authorities. They may, therefore, be regarded as the smaller part of

the cinematographic material possessed by the French War Office. Their present effect on the public is very great. The authorities strike what note they choose every week, and hundreds of thousands of soldiers and civilians respond to it automatically.

"Their future effect will be even greater. They are the leaves upon the grave of the great historian. He is decently interred beneath a mass of incontrovertible fact (certified non-flammable). No more shall his happy pen, dipped alternately in the red ink of fiction and the blue-black writing fluid of the admirable Stephens, make chromatic colour etchings of the two. No more shall he reconstruct historic interviews, depict in vivid terms the conditions of battle which literary civilians have ever been the only persons capable of perceiving.

"Take the visit of King Albert to the French Front —an admirable theme for the historian. The President, General Joffre, and M. Millerand, then Minister of War, accompanied him. They gave him a fine review, too, of a large slice of the French Army. Macaulay, Green, Hume, and their followers would not have failed to tell us the gist of what everybody said, and what the army looked like marching by, viewed from the side. 'At this interview the noble monarch failed not to express his hatred of those filthy and malignant baboons, the Germans,' would thunder his lordship, in the drastic manner of his day. 'The power of France, marshalled like moving fields, went bravely by.' And so forth. The cinematograph sweeps all that away. The official film placed the home-staying civilian in a place from which nobody has ever seen a review before; that is, straight in front of the advancing troops, between whose separate bodies there was but just room for the camera. They came on clear-cut, in heavy masses; one felt

the earth tremble beneath them. Then the cavalry swept by—hoofs, tails, swords, spurs, manes, all clear to the eye. Then came the guns, the beloved 75's of France, bumping over the regularly undulating plain. The camera had then been switched suddenly round, and one saw them going away—no longer clear, but surrounded, like Greek gods of victory, with a flying cloud of dust. Not only that, the expressions and remarks of the King and his hosts were shown, too; any deaf person could have read the words they said as though they were printed. When Joffre and the King talked earnestly apart it was easy for any one who knew lip language to follow everything they said.

"Of course, it jumps to the mind that such an observer is, perhaps, more amusing for the public than for, say, King Albert and General Joffre. There is no privacy in the cinema. If one rubs one's nose one's subjects to the last generation may know it. But privacy has never been the right of kings, nor the purpose of historians.

"Wells, in *The Sleeper Wakes*, explains that in that future world all books were living, moving, speaking pictures in little. We may yet come to that. In the meanwhile, with Governments using the cinematograph to advertise their loans, to record their wars, to propagate their warnings, it is obvious that the pen, already proved less mighty than the sword, is on its way to be proved less mighty than developing and fixing mixtures."

CHAPTER IV

THE DISTANT GUNS (1916)

In 1916 Paris had fallen into the long-distance stride of the tramp who knows there is a long way to go, and took very little notice of herself, beyond a rather bored attention to political affairs in the autumn. How could she be interested in her own concerns, when the battle of Verdun began on February 21, and went on until the guns of the Somme took up the noble tune from July to November? That was a long-drawn melody which drained the conscious existence from all who lived in safety behind the Front. We watched the weather with an intensity almost tragic, we noted the absurd weather-cock on the roof opposite with an attention strained to breaking-point, because when he veered one way it meant German gas on our trenches. London was never near enough to the Front to be sure that her weather obtained there also; here we had a dismal conviction, of which we never spoke, that when our weather was good here it might not be so good there, and when it was bad here it was almost sure to be worse for our men. The weather, indeed, rose from kitchen-maid of conversation to Comptroller of the Household, from the ranks to the bâton. It was war-promotion, swift and dramatic.

The year started badly with the withdrawal from Gallipoli, the crushing of Montenegro, and the Serbian Retreat, the Italian retirement from Durazzo, and nothing save the Russian success at Erzeroum to

balance this tale of misfortune. Long inaction on the Western Front had put us into a state of nervous tension, and on one or two points there was inter-Allied irritation, due to this very suspense. The French were pleased with us for promising that all unmarried men should go to the Front, but that pleasure was but a drop in the total sum of their bewilderment at our dislike of obligatory service. Hanotaux pointed out that, while we were talking of our unmarried men going, France already had her fathers in the line, and the boys of eighteen on their way to join them. That was cold fact, and from one point of view it had no answer. Our effort in munition-making had not been properly laid before the French public, and when a people has invented obligatory service for itself, and carried it on through many a war and many an invasion, and brought it triumphant out of the fire of national disaster, in a century and a quarter, it cannot understand the point of view of an island, inviolate for nine centuries (save when we heard the Dutch guns in the Thames, and made such a wonderful fuss about it!) which stops to consider whether it shall or shall not send all its men to the Front.

The British Navy, which requires two million men to work for it on land, prides itself on its silence. It never mentioned its two million, let alone the number of those who served it afloat. Its silence is dramatic and magnificent, and "in our tradition"; but there were moments when the Briton living abroad, caught between French incomprehension and English pride-of-silence, was tempted to blaspheme, and to say that the Silent Service risked the substance of its service for the shadow of its silence.

Upon this horrid and nervous pause broke the German offensive against Verdun. In a way, we

lived again the very first days of the war. There was the same overwhelming advance of the enemy, the same precipitate retreat of the home power, which produced heroism sixty seconds to the minute, and yet resulted in a retirement. Wild rumours ran round the capital. X. was a traitor, and A. had shot him. B. had fought a duel with Z. between the lines, or something of the sort. Sohrab and Rustum had challenged each other to single combat. Talk ran high, but the only thing that mattered to us was the steady advance of the Germans.

Then came the check. We were afraid to believe it. Yet it lasted. We went to bed holding our breath, and there was a queue at the news-shop, in the dawn, waiting for the papers before they were delivered. And still, the next morning, the French were holding. Maps grew soft and pliable with much handling, and fell open at one place. We began to think that, in spite of all rumours, and in spite of all *communiqués*, the French really had the Germans held. We studied those maps as never civilians have studied maps before—heights and contours, and where a wood came, and what effect a stream might have if it were two feet wider than another stream. And still, although they were thirteen miles from Verdun, eleven miles from Verdun, although even the official mind had brought itself to tell the civilian that the position was really very critical—still, day after day, there the French were, and Verdun, bombarded and shattered, was still inviolate. The wild dash which was to take the Germans into its citadel in a week, became the wave of the high tide, which rushes with ease to its appointed place, but only reaches once its destined line upon the sand.

When Verdun seemed likely to fall, and generals succeeded each other with lightning swiftness in that

district, Paris certainly passed through a moment of dread. Yet it translated itself chiefly into such phrases as: "Even if Verdun did go, we should not be intimidated"; there was still confidence abroad. After a very short time we saw that Verdun would not fall, and she and her defenders became for all France the ministrants of a sacrament six months long. "Ils ne passeront pas" was a phrase ranged for ever in the archives of the country.

It cannot be denied that during the hardest fighting at Verdun French opinion was wondering what the British were doing. We seemed to be sitting in idleness on our own front, which was very short, and there were few people who knew that we had offered to send men to Verdun, or to make an offensive to distract the Germans far earlier than we did. The French were sure of themselves, and when our offensive did come it came at the right moment. When the guns of the Somme took up the chorus of the French guns at Verdun, the German was forced to look two ways at once.

In the meanwhile, Paris went her way. Cafés, theatres, and restaurants were crowded, money was freely spent, and the first hint at restrictions was only a suggestion that imported luxuries might be very much diminished. It was the first timid note which was to swell into a formidable symphony.

Galliéni resigned in March, and died at the end of May. He was accorded a state funeral, as was only natural. He had been a firm and a reasonable Governor of Paris, and had shown that he had imagination by his action in sending out a new army to help in the Battle of the Marne, crowded into taxi-cabs. That contingent was largely composed of the Army of Paris, which theoretically should have remained within the limits of the "entrenched camp"

of the city ; had the battle of the Marne turned against the French, Galliéni would have paid dearly for his boldness in sending his garrison against von Kluck's advance. As it was, when he died he was one of the most honoured men in France, and his action had even invested the Paris taxi-cab with a touch of romance.

Paris had settled into a condition of stolidity almost British ; her citizens were difficult to rouse, impossible to depress.

The even temper of the public was best shown by the fact that it had no supreme hero for the moment. Pétain, it is true, roused enthusiasm for a few days when it was known how he and Castelnau had saved Verdun ; but the fact is that we had had so many enthusiasms in the previous twenty-one months that we had learned to fear them. We had had so many beginnings, and what we wanted was the right continuation, and the only end. So we had learned to husband our applause when a new actor came upon the scene, and to save it for a climax. There were moments when it looked as though even the supreme day would find us afraid of our own emotions. Nevertheless, there was not even then a window in the Champs Élysées or round the Étoile which had not already been let at huge prices for the day when the returning troops should march beneath the Arc de Triomphe ; and vacant houses and flats were all let with the proviso that for that day the new tenant had no right over his own windows and balconies. Even in patriotic fervour the French seldom lose sight of the commercial aspect of life.

General Gouraud was our favourite hero for the moment, and the known adoration for him cherished by his troops added to the respect in which he was and is held. His limp, and his empty right sleeve are a

passport to our kindliest feelings. He had recently reviewed an army corps returned from Verdun. It had all its flags with it, and they streamed out in honourable tatters against a sky of many greys, blown by a fierce wind. Gouraud, standing bare-headed in a jolting motor-car, saluting with his left hand, passed slowly down the plain before that ragged hedge of heroism. He is a very fine-looking man, with a genial glance; hirsute enough, but too dark, for his name of "Lion of the Argonne."

Our only distraction lay in politics. There was a party which was anxious to discuss the early days of Verdun and their vicissitudes, or seemed anxious to do so, and, while the battle still continued, it was obviously an impossible thing to do.

There was only one way of letting the whole country know all about everything, and that was to padlock, in their assembly, the five hundred and fifty gossips who form the French Chamber of Deputies, and hold a secret sitting. It lasted for a week, and it is credibly reported that every single deputy dined out and lunched out each day, paying for hospitality with a report of the proceedings up to date. It was even possible, on payment of a hundred francs a night, to receive a telephone report of the day's sitting every evening. Seven hundred francs was ridiculously dear for a secret which was being unfolded to mass meetings of journalists—for a secret which really did not exist.

The promoters of secrecy were hunting Briand's scalp. The only result of the sitting was to strengthen the Government's position, because in the course of the proceedings the only alternative Governments were shown to be quite impossible for the moment. It is quite certain that no one loves Briand; indeed, all aspiring politicians prefer his place to his company. But, unfortunately for politics, there were those two

disturbing factors, the war and the country, and until there was something to take Briand's place, something more solid than the shadow of Jules Ferry, something more trusted than M. Barthou, something less like death in life than M. Léon Bourgeois, Briand stood a good chance of capturing public opinion.

There were two great features of the secret sitting. One was the appearance of a " White Hope " in the arena in the person of M. Blanc, who, stung to fury by a remark made by one of the coloured Pays Chaud members for the colonies, " precipitated himself upon him," to use the officially sanctified phrase for describing these incidents, which consists in one irate member of Parliament striding theatrically down upon another, but so regulating his speed as to make quite sure that there will be plenty of peace-makers to intervene before he really can get to blows. On this occasion one of the intervening members was the fiery-headed, red-bearded Corsican Ceccaldi, and the whole affair ended in a laugh when a deputy shouted, " Voilà le rouge et le noir qui sortent ensemble chez Blanc ! " Later on, however, the deputy, who objected to being called " a barber's assistant," managed to get in a right and a left before friendly intervention called time. While the latest news of the fighting on this front was spreading among the journalists cooped up in the public waiting-rooms, or strolling about from Marius' Café to the Chamber, a Red Cross car stopped outside the members' entrance, rousing a general laugh.

A public indication of the nature of the proceedings behind the padlocked doors was given when the worn-out journalists were allowed back to the gallery. The debonair and elegant President, M. Deschanel, was a changed man. His clarion voice had been converted into a raucous, husky noise; his viva-

cious moustaches drooped around his mouth. He was deep in consultation with the keeper of the Constitution of France, the placid M. Pierre. Around his chair hovered deputies anxious for his guidance on points of order, one of whom, in passing, touched the presidential back. M. Deschanel impatiently jabbed backwards the point of his elbow, hitting nothing but thin air. The movement was seen by everybody in the House, and a long shout of laughter went up, in which Deschanel himself joined very heartily. This little incident acted as a sort of Bridge of Sighs, or, rather, the laughter was a sigh of relief, and the Chamber passed without too much difficulty from the pandemonium of secrecy to the quiet stillness of publicity.

The battle of the Somme began on the first of July, and dwellers in Paris began to hear on still nights the muttered thumping of the guns. It was a strange and a moving sound, recognisable at once, even to those who had never heard any such thing before. Our own safety was not involved, and yet our very existence seemed to be wrapped up within that concussion, which we could only hear after the noise of the city had died down. Those British guns gave the only correct answer to French and to American croakers. Never at any time was German propaganda more active than during the phases of the Verdun battle which immediately preceded the Somme. A friend had an argument, and a heated one too, with a couple of American writers representing very important American publications, who had been moved by their love of France, if not by their dislike of Great Britain, to believe that it was her deliberate policy to allow the French to be bled white before really going into a big offensive herself. Everywhere among the French also was the agent of German

propaganda at work. His hand was to be seen in countless publications ranging in importance from more or less regular newspapers to pamphlets and fly-sheets distributed by night, shoved under letter-boxes, or sent through the post to selected addresses. Just as in the field German strategy nearly always sought for the weak point of junction between the French and British armies, so did their politicians realise that, unless they destroyed Franco-British confidence behind the lines and between the peoples they could achieve nothing. The suggestions set abroad were mainly to the effect that the British were holding back their men, that the Labour troubles had shown the complete ignorance of Britain of the plight of France, that it was to the interest of British *weltpolitik* so to arrange matters as to leave Europe with a very much weakened Germany, an almost exhausted France, and Britain possessed of an almost-intact Army and a vast and fresh industrial equipment.

That propaganda could not possibly succeed—not that in time the French might not have come to believe in it, but that, even had they, it would have been impossible for them with their backs against the wall at Verdun, with the whole of their Northern Provinces under the heel of the invader, to come to terms with him. The German offensive at Verdun was really the proclamation of a war *à outrance* much more than were the original onslaught and the horrors by which it was accompanied.

Perhaps the most momentous decision ever taken by any army commander was that which, in spite of the tendencies of Joffre, decreed that Pétain should be sent to Verdun with instructions to hold the eastern bank of the Meuse. At one moment evacuation of the bank had been practically decided upon, and all the material, pontoons, railway stock,

and so forth had been collected and in some cases already despatched into the zone of the Verdun army. The conversation between General de Castelnau and General Pétain in the early hours of the morning which sent Pétain to take over the command, with the general inspiration he communicated to his troops contained in the famous words "Ils ne passeront pas," and later on in the phrase "on les aura," made the defence of Verdun a matter of life and death. It made the French realise perhaps even more clearly than before that any attempt at compromise with the enemy had then become impossible, that compromise of any sort meant national death, and they preferred to go down dying with the chance of victory still in their grasp. In this sentiment, in spite of all the insidious activities of the enemy, the Army was the faithful interpreter of the civilian population.

The only quarter in which the firm resolve to "Do or Die" (*Vaincre ou mourir*) was questioned with faint-hearted panic was in Parliament. Much of the panic was, of course, due to political reasons of an egotistical nature; some of it, however, arose from the belief, to be expressed more vehemently later on, that France really had nothing more to hope for, that she had lost her all, and that any further continuance of the struggle would simply lead to a more terrible drain upon her blood and to a more complete enslavement to the German. The German of those days was adroit up to a certain point. He realised that the best time to catch a people napping was when its fortunes were at their lowest. There were people working for premature peace in France before the Verdun offensive began, and the Germans were quick to utilise the many successes they obtained during the long Verdun battle to further the activity of the French pacifists by every means in their power.

In Parliament the effect of all this conscious and unconscious political activity found expression in a series of violent attacks upon the French Government. It was, indeed, quite certain that any renewal of the German offensive upon Verdun would be followed by a renewal of the offensive against Briand in the Chamber of Deputies. It was, perhaps, more a perception of the interdependence of the two events than any real deep-seated admiration of the Briand Government which kept it in power in those dark days of the fight for Verdun.

It was, nevertheless, quite certain that the beginning of the Somme offensive relieved more than the military situation at Verdun. It considerably relieved the political situation in Paris.

The Somme offensive, however, did not reach the height of its efficiency for some days. And right up to the end of July the fate of Verdun was in the balance. In fact, it was after the beginning of the British push that the Germans reached the high blood-mark of their push upon the Meuse capital. They actually got into the Fort de Souville, only one and a half kilometres from the Citadel of Verdun, when our men on the Somme had been fighting for days. When I say they got into the fort that is the actual truth. Six German infantry-men did indeed manage to creep into the works and were immediately killed.

This fact was not generally known in Paris—indeed, it has never been published in France yet—but enough was known of the desperate state of affairs at Verdun for the French public to wonder, with dread, whether the British had not come to their relief too late.

It is to be doubted whether the French ever understood during the war, or ever can understand in future, the tremendous effort of our push upon the Somme.

But one thing is quite sure, that at the time they really were properly grateful for the breathing-space it gave their own exhausted Army.

They put that breathing-space to good use, for while the Somme Front was still active in the late autumn and early winter the French began to sweep back over the fiercely-contested battle-field to the Meuse, and retook Vaux, Douaumont, and Louvemont towards the end of the year.

It was a year of supreme importance from a military point of view. Now there can be no doubt that at Verdun and at the Somme the turning-point of the great campaign was reached. It was in those two vast battles of exhaustion that the spirit and the material of the German armies were worn down.

In France also the effect was acutely felt. The deterioration of civilian moral, and to a lesser extent of that of the troops, was not to make itself felt until the spring of 1917.

More than one successful attempt was made to fight the growing national *cafard*—a word which can best be translated as "hump."

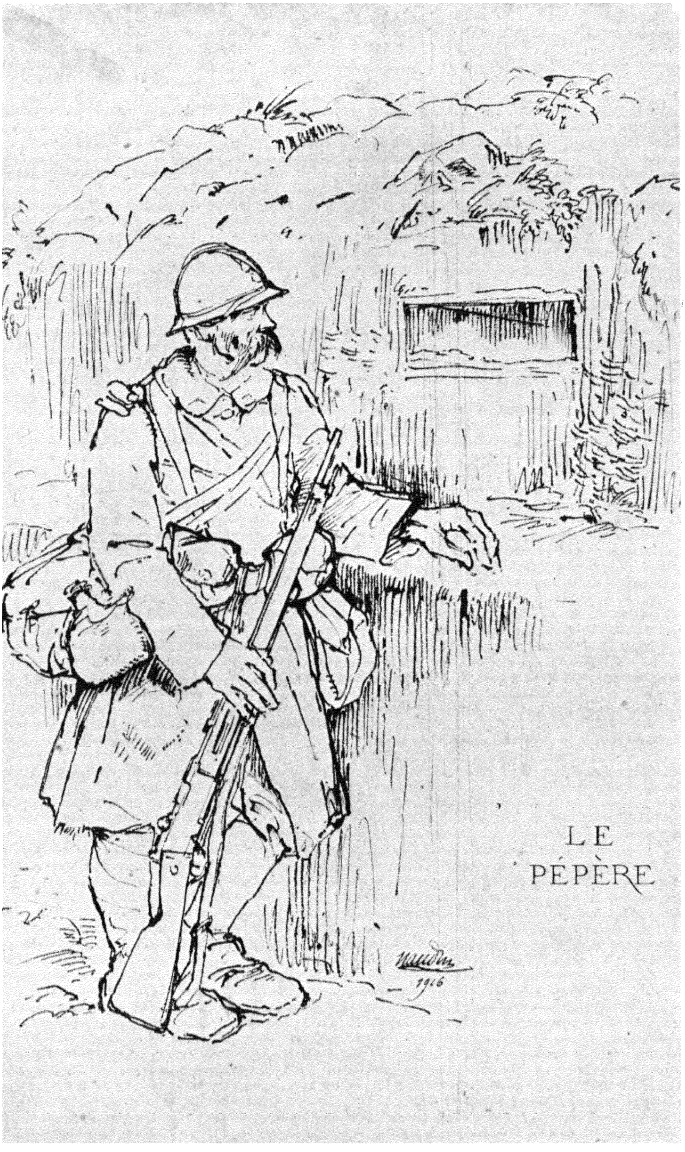
Certainly the most impressive was the celebration of the National fête-day on July 14th.

The dramatic sense of the French dictated the presence of the families of five hundred dead heroes, who received the decorations of their *chers disparus* from the civilian hands of the President. One of the advantages of the monarchical system is that its representative is always ex officio a soldier and a sailor. It is not Poincaré's fault that he is and remains a civilian and wears a uniform like a chauffeur's. But public ceremonies of this nature suffer.

What mattered most was the scene on the boulevards. The people stood eighteen deep to see the soldiers go by, and all the men were bare-headed.

For a French crowd they clapped little and cheered much. The sky was one of grey clouds, in many depths from silver to indigo, broken with sunshine. Its fugitive light played on the troops as they went by. The Belgians came first, the air above them illuminated by the gold and black pennons of their lancers. Then came Great Britain. When her pipes had finished proclaiming that the Campbells were coming, her brass exhorted us to keep the home fires burning till the boys come home. While they evoked ideas of wives and hearths and rest and honour, the long brown legs paced out a big quiet bass of determination. It's a long, long way to victory, but their heart's right there. They had the best reception of the day. The Russians got a louder cheer, but it was not so long sustained. They marched very slowly, chanting a battle-song at the tops of their voices. The standard-bearer pleased the uncritical by making his horse caracole and waving his great golden flag round his head. But the real welcome to the Russians was the deep cheer for the large, slow men behind him.

When the French troops came by the acclamations dropped two notes. You can hear the same thing any day if you listen to a woman speaking first to a friend and then to her small boy. The rest of it might have been deliberate, but even Sir Herbert Tree would not have thought of that. Most shows of this kind in France are not very impressive ; this one was. Every one had three ideas in his brain at once, which is unusual in all circles. Everybody thought about the men before him and their dead comrades, who were here, too ; everybody thought about the Somme, the mutter of whose guns, we knew, could have been heard had we been wholly silent ; and everybody thought about the Day for which this was but the rehearsal.



THE BACKBONE OF FRANCE, 1916.

From the drawing by Bernard Naudin, reproduced by kind permission of R. Hellen, 125 Boulevard St. Germain, Paris.

That inter-Allied march past did much to hearten the public. The greater part of the men had been at the Front twenty-four hours previously and would be there again a day later. They were not home-bred soldiers, polished to home-bred notions of brilliance; they were dusty fighting men, brought back to our ignominious safety to be shown to us. As they came down the boulevards their air-bronzed faces, line upon line, spelt confidence and determination; and when they had passed and one looked after them there was something in the khaki and the blue backs, something in the precision of the step, which was as impressive as if the very houses had marshalled their stones to march against the Boche. If Edinburgh Castle marched down Prince's Street in perfect time to about fourteen different tunes, it would provide a spectacle something similar to that of July 14, 1916.

By the end of the year, the effect had worn off a little, and when the news of the French successes in the Verdun district came, they found us rather dismally preparing for Christmas. The outlook all round was a little drab, and the Socialists were the only lively body among us. They showed it by making several "scenes in the Chamber," loud, unseemly, occasions which disgusted all who read of them. They used any excuse or none. Into a discussion upon Rodin's offer to give his works to the State they suddenly interpolated a wild row about the death of Jaurès. Shouts and growls, little bells madly tinkling, followed upon this beginning of that horrid business known as "a scene in Parliament." Finally the Socialists departed from the House, having done themselves little good.

Even two months of good news had not over-excited the public. Its temper was composed, patient, firm; but hardly cheerful. The affairs of the

Ministry interested it, but a secret sitting a fortnight long was trying to the nerves of those who were excluded from it, and apparently almost equally trying to those who took part in it, judging by their condition when it was over. Joffre's removal from Chantilly to Paris, and Nivelle's installation as Commander-in-Chief; General Gouraud's departure from the Western Front to Morocco, to replace Lyautey, who came to Paris as War Minister, took place with a minimum of comment. It was strange to see so many important displacements, and to wonder what lay behind them, and yet feel so languid about them. That the French took calmly the change in the Mediterranean command was less surprising; it is bewildering to the Briton to live in a country which has three sea-boards and cares so little about its Navy as does France!

Germany's peace proposals fell upon the hardest possible ground—that of apathy. The real feelings of France were expressed in the answer the guns of Verdun gave to those proposals. In Paris people were busy reconstructing their Government and sitting on their Socialists, and trying to get coal, and explaining why butter was so dear; and as everybody knew that everybody else felt just as they did about Germany, we were spared—or disappointed of—the explosion of heroic indignation we half-expected. But the answer was given just the same. Verdun spoke. Verdun explained to the world at large just how we felt about peace. Verdun crossed the t's and dotted the i's, and even indulged in a few italics and exclamation marks. If Verdun had a neck it would have had the entire civilian population of France hanging on it. One wonders if the Germans looked forward to General Nivelle's arrival at headquarters. His P.P.C. card (with the corner

turned down to show he was there in person) was dropped into their letter-box at Verdun with a double knock that must have made them jump.

To tell the truth, it made the civilians jump too; and the start did them good. Rumania and the Socialists, Government, dear coal, and scarce sugar, bad weather, silence on the Somme, had rolled themselves into a ball like underdone suet pudding, and we had a permanent two-in-the-morning feeling which lengthened our faces considerably. Germany's peace proposals did us good; they were so confoundedly cheeky that they stirred us up; but dear Verdun, blessed Verdun, wonderful Verdun, knocked the black dog off our shoulders with a vengeance.

The best summary of the situation was the opening sentence of an article by Jean Herbette: "All the French, even those who govern, are busy reforming the Government."

As to the affairs of civilians, beyond rising prices and threatened strikes, they were not interesting. Now and then an incident occurred which roused us a little.

The arrest of Rochette the financier, reminded us of a fact that we had all forgotten—that there was a time before the war! We all seem to have been born, mature and rather sad, on August 1, 1914, and to have learned vaguely that there had been people before us. But on that very first of August Rochette's name was ringing through Paris, because the reason why Mme. Caillaux was not allowed to plead that her murder of Calmette was a *crime passionel* in defence of her husband, and get the trial and acquittal over in half an hour, was that for political reasons her husband wanted the old Rochette business gone into again, and his share in it shown in the fierce light of innocence as told in courts of justice. It is an old, weary, dismal story, the

Rochette business—intrigues and corruption, criminal finance and worse politics, place-grabbing—the whole miserable business. But the spirit of France showed a clear gleam at last in it. Rochette, the escaped convict, was discovered and arrested when serving under an assumed name as a motor-cyclist in the French Army. He had ventured into France when the war broke out, and volunteered for service.

This autumn France lost, in the person of Captain Dumas, a figure of whom she may well be proud. He became a soldier with the papal Zouaves in 1867, and was wounded; fought in the French Army in 1870, was wounded, taken prisoner, and escaped; subsequently fought in Algeria, Tunis, Gabon, the French Congo, Ivory Coast, Sudan, and Morocco; being retired by the age-limit from the French Army, went out and fought in the Transvaal, aged sixty-six; volunteered for the French Army 1914, but was refused; joined the Belgian, was taken prisoner and escaped; fought with the Africans on the Marne, was wounded six times, fought in the Dardanelles and on the Vardar, was wounded again; found Salonika boring, returned in time to see the opening of the battle of Verdun, was wounded; he recovered and fought on the Somme, was wounded, and, while his worshipping men were carrying him back, was finally shot through the head and killed. He was buried on the battle-field. Indeed it would have been a pity if such a life had ended in a stuffy bed and a mausoleum.

We celebrated All Souls' Day this year more cheerfully than in 1915. The Allies were in a very different position, and those who had lost their men in the war, could see, coming visibly nearer, the shining goal for which they died. There was a great pilgrimage to such graves as the retreating wave of the invader had given up to the living. All were decked with

flowers and flags, for which the local municipalities were responsible in the first place, but even where friends and relatives had not added to the public offering, the hands of cottager and peasant had laid what flowers they had upon the scattered wayside mounds. I shall not soon forget one grave—in a little banked-up garden by the roadside, lying right across the centre bed of fuchsias and the side-border of vegetables. The owner of the little cottage had pulled up flower and vegetable to make that grave the centre of his little plot. As a very great man said, "No man can do more than pull up his vegetables"; he might have added, "especially a Frenchman," who reverences as a religion the products of the earth.

A touching incident took place in that most unromantic place, an underground railway station. It was eleven o'clock, and the place was crowded with people anxious to catch the last train. Suddenly, there appeared a nurse walking between two blind soldiers. It was scarcely necessary for her to ask for room to be made; the crowd fell back as though by magic. At this moment there appeared a little party of the Garde Républicaine on their way home from service at the theatre. When the non-commissioned officer in charge saw the two blind soldiers he said to his men, "Halte! Fixe!" and the little party came to the salute, and so remained till the soldiers had passed them. Nobody who was there will ever forget that little scene.

A universal army involves some curious changes in social rank. Viscounts who are simple privates drive cars containing colonels who are butchers, and specialists who are lieutenants are hastily sought by excellent plodding doctor-colonels, and implored to give their advice. But one of the most amusing of these upside-down episodes (which everybody in France took with the utmost good-humour) occurred

in a large modern house of luxurious flats in a wealthy quarter of Paris. The tenant of the first floor, who pays nearly £1,000 a year rent, is a private in the auxiliary service. The concierge is a lieutenant and a Knight of the Legion of Honour. One day the tenant went to complain to the concierge that on the previous night he had not been able to get in until after he had repeatedly knocked, but before he had got through his first sentence the concierge remarked: "First of all, salute your superior officer, and stand to attention." The tenant stammered out, "But——" and the concierge replied, "There is no but; if I locked you out last night, I am very much inclined to lock you up to-day." Sequel: "A Flat to Let."

The people who enjoyed themselves and spent money in England on mere luxuries even in war-time have their counterpart in France, and France has to admit it. For some time the French public expressed its horror at the doings of this set in the Allied island, without realising that the same thing was going on in France. This year the matter became too public for suppression. Deauville in the summer was a perfect orgy of wealth and amusement. One army contractor paid £17,000 for a single pearl during the three weeks of the season. The price of diamonds went up rapidly; furs commanded fancy prices; and every possible kind of article which is expensive and useless, especially if it is ugly as well, sold as rapidly as though we were all suddenly-rich miners' wives and daughters.

While Paris prided herself on having suppressed all unseemly gaiety during war-time, a small section of her population was by no means content, and took measures to secure its own amusement. No restaurant could remain open after half-past ten,

which involved as a corollary the fact that none of the midnight restaurants need ever open. It was like the spot upon the key of Bluebeard's chamber—the night-life of Paris, when locked out from one place, appears in another. In one or two rather ornamental houses, if you knew the password, you could still, even in 1916, dance the zoological dances of the two Americas. In more than one street in Montmartre, if you knew how to knock at the door like a visitor instead of a tenant, the concierge would not only let you in, but provide you with an excellent cocktail, and good company. To the credit of the French be it said that the chief part of the customers in these places were neutrals, were brought to them by neutrals, and paid their money to the neutrals who finance them.

The year closed on a situation far better than any the Allies had yet known. Paris was in a sober mood, rather discontented, even, because she could not understand what was going on anywhere save at the Front. At home, prices were going up, politicians were wrangling, the Socialists foamed at the mouth if spoken to or if not spoken to, according to their grievances of the moment, and the profiteer was beginning to make a cautious appearance among us as a part of society. We badly wanted something to laugh at, and we could not then know that it was provided for us in a notice, dated October 1, which ran thus:

"General Foch, who commands an Army Group on the Somme, will be 65 to-morrow, and would in the ordinary course of events retire under the age-limit clause. By a decree published in the *Official Gazette* he is maintained in his command without restriction of age." One cannot expect either humour or prophecy from an *Official Gazette*, but in reading that announcement now we can realise how heartily Cassandra could have enjoyed it.

CHAPTER V

THE LONG WAIT (1917)

WHEN Paris for the third time since the outbreak of war put up the little booths for the sale of toys and sweetmeats with which she celebrates New Year's Day, she was in a very abstracted mood. It was true that there was a section of the public which apparently did not notice that there was a war; true that there was another section of the public which not only made money out of the war, but enjoyed that money as though it had been drawn from some natural and happy source; but these two sections did not prevent the enormous majority of the public from living wholly in the idea of the great struggle. A few bejewelled ladies, a few exquisite men in new blue, a few fat red men in restaurants, cannot alter the real truth. The true soul of France is not to be seen in fashionable restaurants; it hides itself, having no need of publicity, but from time to time one caught a glimpse of its unparalleled splendour.

The Verdun film gave us one of them. Five thousand people crowded into the Trocadéro to see it and the Tank film. It was called *The French Reply at Verdun.*

The ruins of Verdun soaked in rain and mud; the fantastic pitted earth-mountains which were once the forts of Vaux and Douaumont, patched with snow; the constant stream of soldiers everywhere; the black chain of little figures pushing towards the fort over the white ground under furious shell-fire; the figure of a motionless sentry gazing out from

the reconquered fort for any sign of danger; and through it all, in dark and in daylight, in mud and in snow, under fire and on the watch, the persistent impression of a force which not only does not waver, but, in spite of everything, goes forward,—these are the things one does not forget.

When the Germans began to evacuate their positions on the Somme, Paris took it quietly. We knew by then (March 1917) that more than such a retirement was necessary to bring victory into sight—more even than the taking of Vimy and the Craonne success. What attention we had to spare for ourselves was entirely devoted to keeping warm. The weather seemed to take a diabolic pleasure in aggravating our difficulties, and we could not console ourselves by thinking what it must be like in the German trenches, without remembering that in the Allied trenches it must be just as bad. When we did manage to get warm, we were positively ashamed of ourselves, remembering those trenches. Yet, warm in bed, it was obviously absurd to get out and freeze because soldiers were cold, and there was nothing for it but to enjoy the warmth, leaving one's nose to feel the cold as much as it would, which it did to the extent of waking one up with its frozen aching.

The frost bound everything for many days. Water ranked among our scarcities, and plumbers would have been kings had they deigned to accept the crowns we offered them. They were far too haughty. One man, implored in moving terms to come and mend a geyser, replied crushingly that ours was the eighty-second on his list and he would come in due course. It was not till the last week in April that the cold finally broke up; and ten days after that we were sweltering in summer heat, which continued with little remission for months!

The entry of the United States into the war on April 6 roused immense enthusiasm in France.

No American in Paris could complain of any lack of enthusiasm or appreciation after America "came in." The Allied gratitude to the United States for their entry into the war was liberally expressed, and Paris saw numberless public and private gatherings, at which our best was done to persuade any American who might have doubted it, that he and his countrymen are very fine fellows. Two and a half years previously, when the Allies first took up arms, they were all too busy to pat each other on the back, and America reaped this advantage by her tactical delay, that we all had time to thank her heartily for what we were about to receive from her. A "Golden Book" was offered to President Wilson, expressive of our gratitude, and bearing an artistic sculpture on its red morocco cover in which the oak and the myrtle are intertwined round the representation of the famous statue of Liberty, appearing behind the American eagle, who decorously refrains, in the interests of heraldic dignity, from either screaming or flapping his wings.

Paris was bestarred and bestriped with great freedom, and speeches of mutual admiration quite darkened the air. With the admirable intention of increasing the value of the tribute, the Eiffel Tower cannon began a salute of 101 guns at the precise moment when one of our best-known baritones began to sing the "Marseillaise" in front of the La Fayette statue. Everybody was pleased, except perhaps the baritone, who found the competition worse than that of the ordinary orchestra. At the same moment the Stars and Stripes fluttered up to keep company with the Tricolour at the top of the Eiffel Tower, and every heart swelled with appropriate emotion.

In June, General Pershing arrived, and in spite of all our discomforts due to the heat (and two months before we were equally uncomfortable with cold, as it was odd to remember), there was no abating the enthusiasm of the crowds that stationed themselves all day outside the Hotel Crillon on the chance of seeing General Pershing. The Place de la Concorde gets every ray of sun there is until so late in the afternoon that the low trees of the Champs Élysées screen it. It may be gathered, therefore, what a strong enthusiasm moved these crowds, and how much fervour they put into greeting the General whenever he appeared.

In a few days, however, I noted: "General Pershing himself has said that two whole days were long enough for how-do-you-do's, and retired to hard work in the rue de Constantine. Since then he has been practically invisible, and the opinions of those who know anything about the activities in the charming house opposite the Invalides is that America's advanced guard means to do its job thoroughly and well. It has certainly cowed the French telephone system into submission; it is almost uncanny to get into communication so quickly with a public department. Meanwhile, the humbler members of the Mission, who are quartered in the same barracks with our British Military Police, are very unlike the popular notion of Americans, in that they keep themselves to themselves like the traditional British milord of mid-Victorian times. Whether they have received a *consigne* of silence, or whether they really do not want to talk to their colleagues, will be proved by subsequent events.

"In this connection a British corporal of our military police told me a story which strikes me as the best example of unconscious art in story-telling that one

could find, and also of Tommy's reliance on his hearer to supply what he thinks it unnecessary to say. The story goes thus: 'These 'ere French, they're queer; they can't 'elp it, of course, but they do 'ave the rummiest ways. I suppose it's because they're French. But their Ambulance Service, I will say it's awfully good—that quick, that efficient; *tray bong*, in fact. The other day, the Americans come along to be quartered with us, up along of them Fusilieers Marines of the French. Of course, them speaking in a manner of thinkin' the same language, we ses to them: "Come and name it!" Not a bit of it; they wouldn't talk, they wouldn't 'ave a drink. P'r'aps they'd been told not to; anyway, they wouldn't come near us. So one of our men—you know him, m'm, McTavish—he's been to tea and dinner 'ere—he ses: "Look 'ere! I bet you I make one of them Americans come and 'ave a drink sociable!" And, sure enough, 'e goes off and a bit later we sees 'im and a Yank in the canteen. McTavish orders drinks, and when they come, the Yank, he ses: "'Ere's to the President!" and McTavish drinks to the President, and then the Yank of course orders a round. McTavish ses: "'Ere's to King George!" The Yank ses: "To 'ell with your Kings!" And that Ambulance Service 'ad 'im in 'orspital inside of twenty minutes. It's a jolly good service, though the French *are* queer.'"

Whether on account of this incident, or orders changed, or misunderstandings cleared away, there was no lack of sociability about the Americans later on.

"Pershing's only blunder, so far, is his name. He should have been tactful enough to have one that could be easily Gallicised. The French steadily refuse even to try to pronounce any foreign name in the

manner of the country to which it belongs. They adopt a much simpler, if perhaps less complimentary, method by turning all names into French. Pershing is Percingue, and Percingue he will remain, but the transliteration does not please the French wholly, and they cannot conceal the fact that they wish it were Carson, Bennett, or something more easily pronounced. General Pershing really ought to have thought of this point before coming to a country which talks of a Browning revolver as a Brovnangue."

On July 4, there was a procession of American soldiers through the streets of Paris which drew enormous crowds and caused immense enthusiasm. Their magnificent appearance was the subject of much talk, and although their uniform looks tight and uncomfortable and unworkmanlike, it certainly shows off their physical advantages. Tall, square, with faces mostly falling into two categories—the Rio-Jim-Wilson face, lean, long, dour, or the baby cherub innocent of eye and plump of cheek, but both having a curious family likeness about the mouth and the directness of the glance—the American soldier became an immediate success in France. He had come at a moment of stress, and we were grateful to him. The only persons who mentioned the years that had gone before were the Americans themselves, and an occasional jealous Briton (but only when among Britons) who saw the Union Jack wiped from the streets of Paris, and thought that perhaps Mons had vanished from the mind of France. The American success was immediate and complete, and lasted for a very long time. It was subsequently slightly impaired by three kinds of American: the American who drinks nothing but water, the American who drinks everything but water, and the American who can't tell the difference between the French girl he

can talk to and the French girl he can't, and will persist when he has struck the latter. These were minor details, perhaps, but in Paris they were felt until Château-Thierry helped to wipe them out. At any rate, when the Americans came, they were received with open arms, and they brought with them a publicity service which was the envy of all the allied nations. When America does a thing well, she not only says she has done it, but she says without mincing that she has done it well, and proceeds to prove it several times over.

When anything happened in Paris or round it, such as the awful explosion at Courneuve, everybody knew in a few hours that American Red Cross ambulances were on the spot immediately afterwards. Nobody to this day has been told, save those who happened to know, that British ambulances were also there. I will *not* be led into a digression here, but if this book were a Wagner opera, the leitmotif would be a query about our propaganda; where it was, why it wasn't, and how it was what it was.

France went quite mad about Americans, and Paris, which is always the centre of any such national feeling, embraced all the kinds of people who contributed to it—even the American who thought his country could have come in sooner, and anyhow thought she was accepting too lightly the grace-before-meat, and would find it difficult to live up to, and who therefore went about with bowed head and hushed tongue. When the Americans got into the fighting line, they behaved as everybody would have expected; but there is no denying that France, having most illogically greeted men who had only seen St. Nazaire as though they were the Iron Division from Verdun, suffered a chill in her own feelings, simply because she had heated them to a point at which the tempera

ture could not be maintained. There was a time when the American soldier thought France was ungrateful: it was only a mood, and France had had four years to get moody in. And, if one might suggest it, the kind of American who drank everything but water, few in number as he might be, was a little apt to proclaim in public that he had come over to win a war Europe had muddled; and he forgot that the guns of Verdun still echoed in our ears, and that we had not forgotten the Marne.

The Americans, once in the front line, had no need of propaganda to tell the French what they were doing, and they certainly had no lack of appreciation from the Allies for their fine feats of arms. It may be permitted to an observer to say that the American soldier was as brave as the French soldier of Verdun, and that that is the finest compliment that history affords for any fighting man. It afterwards fell to the lot of the American troops to fight at Verdun, and that "name of thunder" is hailed in America as a name redounding first of all to American credit. But we who had lived in Paris during the first seven months of 1916 associate that name first of all with the man of Verdun as we saw him occasionally in those days, on leave in the city, or tramping from one station to another—a tired, indomitable, far-eyed, unshaven soldier in a faded blue coat stained with mud, in a dinted helmet that looked as if he had carried it off from a medieval museum, with a heavy kit on his back, and in every inch of him strong. Hercules and Lysander and all the rest of those splendid people from the past did not matter half as much to any one then alive as one of these French soldiers, made entirely of granite and iron except for their great hearts that are stronger and more enduring than stone or metal or human weakness.

Far from grudging applause to his predecessors, the American is the first to feel honoured at being associated in the Verdun sector with the unsurpassable French fighting man as Lafayette was associated with Washington.

At this time the submarine warfare made all our communications uncertain, and the French posts in particular, always casual to a degree, took advantage of this Kaiser-sent excuse to keep letters an unconscionable time. If it was frequently four days from Paris to London it was often three from North Paris to South Paris, and Scotland had apparently incurred the wrath of the post-office sorting officials here, for letters sent thither seldom arrived at all. Perhaps it was due to the fact that the writers, accustomed to the likings of their Scottish friends, addressed the envelopes to "Grande Bretagne" rather than to "Angleterre," a destination puzzling to the French post-office official. I once tried to address a telegram thus, and the puzzled clerk, after explanations which I had hoped would prove sufficient, insisted on my paying twopence extra to add "Angleterre" to the address, if, as he said, I insisted on including the unnecessary words "Grande Bretagne." As the telegram never arrived, I was deprived of the pleasure of knowing what the recipient would have made of the address.

This may have been the reason why letters to Glasgow took from four to seven days longer than those addressed to London, if they arrived at all. I know of five successive letters to Scotland in fewer months which never did. Telegrams were equally eccentric, especially those sent from ports of arrival between England and France. These were always changed by the authorities, so that "Safely arrived" became "All well, over without accident," and the

like, in order to avoid the danger of prearranged codes being used by spies. A telegram sent from Le Havre to Paris might take thirty-six hours, from Southampton twenty-four, and from Southampton to London a bare two hours; ordinary Paris-London telegrams took until very recently anything from nine to thirty-six hours. This has been a sad drawback to trade, taken with the absence of all telephone facilities between the two cities. As to the telegrams sent on the journey between the capitals, they were deliberately held up, for Secret Service reasons, and of course nobody could grumble at that. Yet, when submarines and mines were rampant, and journeys that should take only twelve hours took forty-eight, it was very wearing to those innocent of all idea of spying, to know that their relatives and friends were suffering agonies of suspense, while the travellers were peacefully moored to the extremely uninteresting quays of Havre or Southampton, or rolling about in the uneasy dark on unexpected portions of the Channel.

I should like to pause here for a moment to say a fervent "Thank you" to various Scotland Yard officials on duty at ports and stations of arrival and departure. They seem to have made a corner in patience and good-will and good manners. Once convinced that you did not bear a German passport in your left heel, nor secret writing in sympathetic ink under your right shoulder-blade, these officials always seemed to have the time and the will to help with passports and luggage. They were as incorruptible as Robespierre, and rather more deadly to those they suspected; but to the heavy-eyed, sea-sick, over-tired, wretched passenger, forced by business to travel, they were the very soul of courtesy and hospitality. At six in the morning, in the pouring rain on Havre quay

(and it rains there at all hours, but especially at six in the morning), they were bright-eyed and alert, wide awake, and apparently quite delighted to see somebody whose advent could merely mean trouble to them. The only happy memory I have of Havre is that with which successive Scotland Yard officials have provided me; and if I have one kindly feeling for Southampton apart from the kindliness of Scotland Yard, it is merely due to the accident of an air-raid which delayed our boat and let me go careering through the New Forest for a few unforgettable hours in a taxi-cab which ought to have been prosecuted for taking me. I did not report it to Scotland Yard on returning to the boat, because the war has taught me to take the good which is provided, whether it is from the gods or no, and to seize every opportunity, in a world where the German exists, of believing in the goodness of being alive, and the kindness and straightness of the other chap. Besides, I might have been prosecuted myself, had I only known the rules!

Anyway, I lift my glass to the many Scotland Yard officials I have met during this war, and if ever my sins place me on a sodden quay in the driving rain of a winter dawn, I will try to carry forward to the credit of the C.I.D. the behaviour their inspectors meted out to miserable travellers. But I shall never be able to beguile the waiting in the Customs with the entrancing true tales of spy-hunting which I have heard! Once your credit is good, you may be told a story or two; perhaps when Dora has departed this life some of us may search for our benefactors (but they are wide-scattered) and ask for more histories. Thank you, C.I.D. inspectors at several ports and three or four stations; thank you many times.

I would also like to thank some of the Military

Police, who, once they knew you, would carry your baggage in crowded stations, instal you in the emptiest of the carriages, and then, appearing behind the officers they were bound to serve, with a wonderful don't-take-no-notice-of-me expression on their faces, lest the female civilian should so far forget herself, departed with the most comprehensive winks I have ever seen, behind the immaculate back of Balliol in khaki, or its equivalent.

There were a number of aspects of life in Paris in those days which I find noted at the time, such as the increasing appearance of women in civil life, which was very remarkable in France. Here we never had Wrafs or Wrens or Waacs, and there was even at one time an agitation to withdraw young girls from service in hospital wards, on the grounds that the sights they saw there were not fit for "well-brought-up young girls." The idea of women in any uniform other than that of the various branches of the Red Cross and its sister societies, is quite contrary to French notions, and even to the end curious eyes turned after women dressed in khaki or blue, or in the very neat dark grey of the American Y.M.C.A. The latter, by the way, was the only uniform at once becoming and workmanlike devised for women. Among the rest there were different forms of unpractical white, of clumsy brown or grey or blue, of fancy dress, but the Americans beat them all for a combination of all the virtues.

I find the following among my notes of our existence at that time:

"Paris postwomen have got to work, and very trim they look in their black overalls and black straw hats. They are allowed to wear a little white round the neck, which makes the costume very becoming. Carrying the usual little square box, so different

from the English postman's bag, they started about their work with all the earnestness of new brooms. Somebody remarks that they outdid in this respect their male predecessors, but that would not be difficult, for Paris postmen have always treated with lighthearted indifference the letters in their care.

"After postwomen, tram conductresses, women ticket collectors, and so forth, Paris is seeing women in charge of hose-pipes. At first in the gardens of the Tuileries and other public enclosed spaces, and then in the streets and on the boulevards themselves, these women, neat in their black overalls, their big hats, and their sabots, have earned golden opinions. They seem really anxious that passers-by shall not get wet, which is more than one can say for the Kabyles who have been fulfilling this duty for some little time.

"In 1870 the trees of the Bois de Boulogne were cut down to provide fuel for Paris. So far this has not been done in the present crisis, but during the great cold, in the forest of Saint Germain and out at Vincennes, people took matters into their own hands, and, as they are technically allowed to do, cut down underbrush and the smaller trees. The Garde Champêtre were on duty to see that nobody attacked the older trees, which can ill be spared.

"The French love their trees. In more than one place in Paris there are houses deliberately deformed by their architects in order not to interfere with some special tree. In the Luxembourg they have museum trees labelled, not only with their names, but with the date of their birth. The forests of France are the admiration of every one, and our own Indian Service of Woods and Forest makes the major part of its studies from the French at Fontainebleau. The forests of France have contributed more than their

share to national defence, for trenches are tremendous wood-eaters. Timber is required to keep the men above the ever-rising floods of mud. It is required to strengthen the trench walls. Hundreds of miles of road have had to be built across soft ground. The quickest method of building these roads, which have sometimes to carry the weight of heavy guns, is simply to lay down a broad band of tree-trunks. Whole woods have been blasted out of existence by shell-fire. In the Argonne, for instance, one of the finest forests of the country, there is a patch of some seven to eight square miles which looks as though a moth had eaten away every inch of the ground.

"The reafforestation of France is one of the first problems which will clamour for solution at the end of the war.

"The Shakespeare Society here has just celebrated its inauguration by a performance of *The Merchant of Venice*. The aim of the society is to co-operate further in strengthening the intellectual bonds that unite France and the English-speaking races in the interests of humanity and liberty. At the preliminary meeting of the society the American Ambassador paid a high tribute to the work France and England are doing in support of the Allied nations. It would be odd if they were not, considering they are two out of the three principal Allies. M. Boutroux drew particular attention to what America has done for France, and the meeting closed with a strong impression that every one had been talking about Shakespeare. If it seems an odd moment for people to be producing *The Merchant of Venice*, it must be remembered that in every country there is a class of mind which prefers detail to general observation, and that after all a Shakespearian Society is as good as any other organisation for gathering together

and making speeches about the noble Allies, the well-meaning neutral, and the dastardly Boche.

"The industry of the French shows itself among the *poilus*, directly they come home on leave, who nearly all go round to the scene of their former occupation and offer a helping hand. Indeed, it is an unwritten law among the civilian comrades that one of them shall lose a day's pay under such circumstances to enable the soldier to earn a little pocket-money. Those with businesses of their own start right away, and thus give the wife, or whoever is carrying on the concern, the chance of a little rest and recreation. A taxi-driver in uniform is not an uncommon sight and a question usually brings the reply: 'This is my own car, and I am home on leave from the Front for a few days.'

"Occasionally the soldier-driver asks for a rather higher fee than the journey warrants, and often gets even more from a sympathetic fare who can admire the energy that prompts a *poilu* on leave from the trenches to buckle to and work during his precious hours of leisure.

"One of the biggest post offices in Paris has just installed a letter-box divided into seven compartments, which take up the whole of a large window. The compartments are labelled: Paris, Provinces, Abroad, Military Correspondence, Great Britain, Printed Matter, and Samples. The main significance of these labels lies in the inclusion of a whole box for correspondence, directed to Great Britain. Nothing could show more clearly how greatly communications between the two countries have increased in the last two and a half years. It is true that before the war, in two or three post-offices, there were small special boxes in which one could post letters intended for Great Britain an hour later than those for any other

foreign country; but these boxes were very small, and so little used that the post-office employés frequently forgot to produce them after the ordinary foreign post had gone. The new post-box in the Rue St. Roch shows very clearly that such an expedient would not be sufficient for the present correspondence.

"The latest trench story concerns money-lenders, and the reports recently furnished upon two members of the fraternity, one gallant and the other the reverse. Upon the one report was noted, 'Never charges, always over-charges'; and upon the other, 'Refuses to advance except upon security.'

"Our new identity cards have resulted in the overworking of all the photograph shops of Paris which make a speciality of quick and cheap photographs for passports and other official papers. One is sorry for the overworked photographer, although he has benefited by increased takings; but one is more sorry for the sitters. I have seen a good many of the official portraits, and not one of them has failed to lend the subject an expression of indignation and bloated astonishment, mingled with a desire to murder the nearest person. Every line in the face is accentuated, all the eyes are too small and the cheeks too fat, unless one happens to be very thin, in which case one looks like a living skeleton with homicidal mania and acute tuberculosis. But all this one could forgive if only the resulting photograph were unrecognisable. No such luck! A diabolical faithfulness reigns over all the libellous features graven in the photograph.

"The rumour spreads apace that there is to be coal in Paris next winter. What was last week a vague promise is now thundered at us from all quarters. At what price it will be available, or if transport will

be there to bring it from the coalyards to our houses we do not know; but we are infinitely cheered to know that it is to be there at any rate. To tell the truth, we need cheering up. We, the French public that is, have come to one of those dreary stretches when we long for something definite to happen to shake us out of the melancholy lethargy into which we have fallen. Not even the Fourteenth of July really shook us up properly. The 8,000 soldiers who passed before us, some of them having arrived straight from the Front the night before, looked more cheerful than we did. When the French public wants to grouse it does not let anything, either business or pleasure, love or hate, stand in the way of fulfilling its desire. It does not always mean very much, and it is better to let the fit blow over, especially as the grousing is not so very deadly. If a German came near us while we were in the very act of muttering that the war was too long, he would very soon discover that we are as keen as ever on our own methods of shortening it. The weather is trying, too; it is hot and humid, the sort of weather in which, while you know you ought to feel cool, even to move your little finger is enough to make your very toes hot; so you must please let us have our Monday breakfast mood; we shall be all right by lunch-time.

"The 'Marraine' fever is still raging in Paris. A Frenchwoman has just received a letter from her godson which contains a scathingly satirical suggestion, by which he intends to read a moral to the careless women who live through the war without giving a thought to what it means. He says that he thinks it would be a good idea to reverse his relationship to his godmother. He will be her godfather, write her comforting and cheering letters, and instead of delicacies, which are rare, he will send her Boche

trophies to reinspire her patriotism. Every four months she will try and get a permit to pass a seven days leave with his regiment.

" 'Every evening,' he writes, 'we will go to the theatre of war and you will see a wonderful show of fireworks. You shall see all our little amusement places. We have a maze—*The Labyrinth*, in which one can wander for ever. . . . The Game of Massacre is one of our pastimes. It is a work of great variety, with sudden appearances and disappearances of the object looked for; a shooting-gallery; and the villages are even better than a cinema; and finally we have a reconstruction of the life of Cave Men. . . . These little distractions, spread out over seven days, will do you a great deal of good, and it is with a new moral that you will return for repose to the rear.' "

There can be no question that the idea lying behind the Catholic institution of the Day of the Dead is beautiful and that the thoughts and sentiments it evokes are noble. At the same time one wonders if at a time of continuing and increasing misery it is wise to allow a whole nation deliberately to plunge into the gulf of dark despair. On All Saints' Day and the Day of the Dead in 1917 there were endless official processions carrying wreaths, laying them on tombs of the departed soldiers, and looking appropriately mournful, each procession accompanied by its cinematograph operator. In the meanwhile the ordinary population streamed to the churches and cemeteries as usual, dressed in black, and everybody talked about the dead till the living were thoroughly ashamed of themselves. The weather joined in. All Saints' Day was dry, grey, hard, grim. All Souls' was soft, warm, weeping, of the very texture of depression, a hot wet day that drew strength from your bones and filled your soul with tears. All

correctly constituted people were very sad; all the ordinary people were very cross, for of such is the kingdom of earth. The necessary visit to one's family cemetery over, there was nothing to do but sit in front of a café trying to think of something other than Italy, Russia, and the departed members of one's own circle. In times of peace, prosperity, and gladness, a day devoted to this mortification of the soul is salutary and elevating, but in a time when for three years every day has been a Day of the Dead, and at a moment when two of our Allies were apparently down and out, or nearly out, it can only, and did only, produce a wave of the profoundest depression. The unfortunate *poilu* and Tommy on leave in Paris that Thursday and Friday must have heartily wished themselves back in the light and merriment of those infernal trenches. As a certain Briton said, gazing up the Rue La Fayette in the falling November dusk: "But it's as bad as Victoria Street on a Sunday!"

On the whole, 1917 was not a bad year for the civilian. He may not have thought so at its close, but before 1918 was far advanced he had changed his mind, for that year, before it brought us victory, brought us air-raids beyond our imagination, bombardment by an unbelievable big gun, and a German advance which recalled the darkest days of 1914. These things we could not foresee, any more than, after settling down to dun-grey endurance, we could imagine that November of this year would wrap us in the purple and scarlet of the victory we had dared to believe in, but hardly dared to picture.

CHAPTER VI

RATIONING (1917–1918)

THE history of rationing in France is, I am afraid, one which will rather surprise the British public. Friends in England, from the very start of the war, were a little too much inclined to look upon the Parisian as a sufferer. They rather exaggerated our military perils and they grossly over-imagined our alimentary dangers.

The only real trouble people in Paris have had, from a food point of view, throughout the war has arisen from the fact that you could not persuade anybody in the country to obey the spirit of any of the elaborate regulations drawn up for the general benefit of the community. Food Minister succeeded Food Minister, system followed upon system, and still there remained the fact that on meatless days you could always, if you were base enough, obtain meat, and find your lump of sugar in your coffee-cup when sugar was officially supposed to be unobtainable.

The French, from the point of view of discipline, were extraordinary; their sons went out without a moment's questioning at the call of mobilisation, and then the civilian population settled down to disobey all sorts of edicts and decrees the observance of which was declared to be of national importance!

The situation in France was of course complicated by the fact that many of her provinces were for so long overrun by the enemy. It was obviously impossible when those provinces became freed, in the first moment

of their joy to impose upon them any drastic system of deprivation. The army, too, had naturally to be fed upon a scale capable of maintaining its physical health and its pugnacious spirit. It was equally impossible that the civilian populations in the zone of the armies should be subjected to the same regulations as those living on the sunny shores of the Mediterranean.

We had, it is true, our sugar-cards and our bread-cards. We never went as far as England, and stopped short of a meat-card. The principle which first actuated our rulers was that, by leaving every food-stuff untrammelled in its sale, its consumption would, by force of circumstance, become impossible, by the rapidly rising price of food. Unfortunately, however, salaries and wages rose almost as rapidly as the price of food-stuffs, and you had the curious condition of affairs that in England there was no butter to be had and that the Prime Minister, passing in a motor-car to the coast on his return from one of the Inter-allied Conferences, stopped for a quarter of an hour at a country market and purchased a couple of pounds of butter with which he triumphantly presented Mrs. Lloyd George on his return to No. 10 Downing Street.

The French were never at any time during the war able to appreciate how far Great Britain restricted herself in the matter of food. They are constitutionally unable to see in any regulation anything but a rule to be broken, either by slipping a five-franc note into the hand of a *maître d'hôtel*, or on some larger scale of more or less innocent corruption.

Food Ministers everywhere have an uncomfortable job, but in France their function is specially difficult. The French are deeply conservative in all ways connected with the table and their food, and they quietly

and mulishly refuse to consider that any restriction or regulation need apply to them. When asked to eat less bread or less meat, they reply, "But we like eating it!" and seem to think that that settles the question. When we had three meatless days a week, they bought large quantities on the day preceding them; and, if the weather turned hot and some of the meat went bad, they openly lamented the fact, without seeming conscious that they had committed an unpatriotic action in buying it. They wanted meat, they were used to meat, and meat they would have. Hermann-Paul published a mordant picture of a woman in deep black, crying: "They've killed my husband and taken my son prisoner, but they won't make me do without meat!" That attitude was general.

It was astounding to live among a people who every day gave proof of the highest qualities of patriotism and endurance and heroism, whose fighting men one loved and admired more every day, and to see with what obstinacy they held out against even the lightest restriction. When bread was rationed, the very people who proclaimed the most loudly that they could not possibly manage on ten ounces a day would break up their bread at table, instead of cutting it, take far more than they needed, and display not only selfishness in the matter but wanton carelessness.

The meat restrictions affected not only French appetites, but French society. Informal hospitality is very rare here. Middle-class French families usually have one scale of life when they are alone, and another when they have visitors. They feed well, but they practise various economies which they would be ashamed for a visitor to see—for instance, in many small households a tablecloth of American

cloth is spread for meals, and napery is kept for great occasions. The mistress of the house wears a wrapper till the afternoon; her husband has an old coat for house-wear which he considers unpresentable to outsiders. Much formality surrounds entertaining. A French lady told me that if her own mother and sister called on her about six o'clock, she would not dream of asking them to stay on to pot-luck dinner; they would think it a poor compliment. When you are asked to "an informal little dinner," you will find that five courses are the very least you will be offered, and these may quite probably include both meat and poultry.

Meatless days, therefore, struck a blow at the very quiet entertaining which was all France had the heart for during the war. French people would not dream of offering their friends a meatless dinner. They would telephone in triumph to change a previously arranged date from an unrestricted to a restricted day, boasting that they had been able to get an illicit joint. One got over being shocked, because the practice was so general. But even old friends they would not invite on the restricted days unless they had wangled some meat from somewhere; as to acquaintances or business colleagues, they would have been humiliated to the core if they had been forced to offer them such a meal. My cook grieved over me and my mad notions, because we were just as likely to have guests to luncheon or dinner as not when we had nothing but fish and vegetables to offer them. One day she pleaded with me, actually with tears in her eyes, because she knew two people were coming to dinner the next day. "Oh! Won't Madame just this once let me buy some meat to-day to keep for to-morrow! Just a little, little joint! Just for once!"

The French looked upon it as a sign of eccentricity if one kept to regulations. In 1918, when a good many rich Parisians fled to the country to get away from Bertha, they found that the provinces were much more inclined to take these regulations seriously than was Paris. Then the visitors uplifted their voices and complained at the absurdity of country-folk, their narrow ideas and ridiculous ways!

Hoarding went on here unchecked. The moment sugar-rations were proposed, housewives all went about buying all they could get, and they did it despite the immediate rise in prices, and with a conviction that this was the right thing to do, and that it would be bad housekeeping not to do it. In every house was a well-filled store-cupboard, and it was replenished from time to time by any means which offered, whether these fell under headings of bribery and corruption or not. Nobody ever thought of bringing in a food-hoarding Act; it would have meant a house-to-house visitation, and the Government that had tried any such measure would have stood to lose office.

Of course, all this sent up prices, and encouraged the profiteer. If he had a client who would pay him five francs a pound for sugar, why should the grocer not ask five francs? Why should the tradesman set up as moralist and philanthropist, when neither he nor the customer thought there was anything wrong or unpatriotic in their deal?

One cannot explain this curious blind-spot in the French mind, one can only wonder at its very definite existence. There was this excuse, for what it is worth —we did have a set of the most utterly idiotic regulations that ever exasperated a housewife. They were constantly changing. I have eaten a meal in a restaurant which was legal while it was being cooked

and illegal before it was served. One was utterly bewildered by the cloud of new rules which buzzed about us like gnats. "Two meatless days—no, one; no, let's try three; or, what about six meatless evenings? Oh well, let's go back to two meatless days."

Six meatless evenings a week we had for a while, and that was about the limit of absurdity. We had no meat-cards, and the household was untouched by this restriction. No meat could be sold in any restaurant in the evening: that was all it amounted to. So the Parisian lunched out and dined at home!

Three consecutive meatless days turned many a hair grey. The price of fish soared to the clouds, vegetables went after them, and the bread chose that time to turn greyer and sourer even than usual. The two-days restriction would have been easier, only they were fixed for Monday and Tuesday. On Monday the Paris fish-market is closed. The result was that on Sunday fish and meat doubled their prices.

The Government tried to meet the situation by ordering the fish-market to open on Mondays. The men employed there immediately threatened to go on strike, as they had no other free time in the week. In the meanwhile fish left over from Sunday's sales was left to rot on Monday, and on Tuesday we were told that the high price of this commodity was due to difficulties of transport!

After a long time, restrictions were made in sugar—official restrictions, that is. The householder had had trouble in getting any at all before ever sugar-cards were heard of. These were given out in March 1917, after a very wearisome business due to somebody's idea that it would be a good thing to make a kind of census out of our applications for cards. There were many formalities, and a great deal of standing about

queues to get forms of application, and so forth. Finally the cards were distributed. They allowed us a pound and a half of sugar per head per month, to begin with, but that was afterwards diminished to a pound, and then to three-quarters of a pound; while every now and then we were suddenly told that there would be no sugar for a month. No allowance was made for visitors, or for members of the household on leave. French soldiers had their military cards—sometimes; but, as the British Army had no such institution, the many households which entertained Tommy or his officers could not draw any on their behalf. As Tommy prefers three lumps to a small cup of tea, hostesses who invited him to parties were hard put to it to find enough sweetening for him!

In the matter of sugar we were worse off than London; in everything else save coal our restrictions were quite liberal. Paris suffered from muddle or profiteering, because the sugar question cannot have been as difficult in itself as we found it. Confectioners, during all the time they were allowed to bake cakes and sweet things, seem to have had no trouble in getting enough sugar for their wares. It is true that for a time they were not allowed to make any sweets or cakes, but long before the prohibition the private household was sugarless, while the confectioners' windows were brimming with good things. I counted over a hundred and twenty different kinds of expensive sweetmeat and cake in one fashionable window one afternoon, at a time when mothers of young families were at their wits' ends to know where to get the necessary sugar for the children. The shop was full of people, mostly women, but a few soldiers, eating cakes coated with chocolate and filled with cream, cakes powdered with sugar, cakes covered

with crystallised fruits. *Marrons glacés*, and expensive crystallised fruit from the South were still on sale at Christmas, 1917. The prohibition of sweets made from chocolate came long after the rations of the ordinary household had been reduced. These things naturally made the public feel that it was being played with.

First of all, we had cakeless days. On Tuesdays and Wednesdays confectioners did not open their shops. But on Mondays, of course, they were besieged! The restriction did away with the five o'clock *goûter*, but not with the private consumption of cakes. Then came a decree abolishing fresh pastry and biscuits. Dry ones could still be baked. Here for a while London again had the advantage of us. Then came an extraordinary regulation. While we might buy all the cakes we could afford, and more (and their prices were terrifying), we might not eat them on the premises on which they were bought! One of two things, therefore, happened: one went into another shop and ate the cake while making a purchase; or one bought half a pound instead of one, and took them home. In any case, those who meant to have cake, had it; while those who interpreted our rationing in the light of national interest had for many months given up all such frivolous feeding.

At last manufacture of biscuits, gingerbread, and the like, was absolutely forbidden. But since there were large stocks in hand, grocers were given a certain length of time in which to sell them. That extension was renewed time and time again; as late as August 1918 these things were on sale, and, after being told it was unpatriotic to buy them, we were being implored to do so, to finish up the stocks! Public official sales of biscuits were made in different districts of Paris. Perhaps it is hardly to be wondered at that regula-

tions of this kind failed to command the obedience of the public.

We were never rationed for fats at all. Butter vanished from the market every time its price was fixed, or rather it vanished from the counter to recesses under the counter, from which it emerged if it heard the clink of much money. I read the other day a paragraph in the *Times* of August 24, 1916, and it was like reading a fairy-tale. It stated that Paris housekeepers were delighted to hear that fresh butter would shortly be put upon the market at 1*s.* 7*d.* a pound, or 4*d.* a pound cheaper than it then was. 1*s.* 7*d.*! It has been up to 12*s.* 6*d.* since then, and for months, when it could be had, was anywhere between 8*s.* and half a guinea. Margarine at 2*s.* a pound was a very poor substitute, because Paris knows not the good margarine of England, and what we get here is very watery, and does not do at all well for cooking. As to dripping, when you had finally fought your French cook to a standstill and made her use it, it was only to discover that the butchers were holding it up in order to make a higher profit on it. Besides, they make a wonderful affair of it, melting it down and spicing it, adding garlic and other things, till it is miles removed from the good, plain dripping of home.

Still, we were *not* rationed in fats, otherwise than as the profiteer decreed. We paid him large sums for butter, because the bread was so nasty, otherwise we should have left him to salt it at his leisure, and salt butter here is looked upon as unusable except for coarse cookery. The bread fluctuated. Already in 1914 the famous rolls of France had been forbidden in Paris, although one could still get them at Versailles. The bread went through wonderful colour-changes, from a sour, damp grey, mostly holes and

extremely indigestible, to an unhealthy brown. It was made with successive mixtures of different flours. English bread did the same thing, I know, but it never came within miles of the hateful stuff we had at one period. When it was toasted all the edges round its air-holes burned, and the insides of them became damp! The flabby crust was just eatable, if loaded with butter or jam or chutney or something else which would take away the taste; but the crumb could only be swallowed by dint of heroism, and a noble disregard of the horrid sensations which followed. Even the French gave up trying to eat bread between every two mouthfuls of their meal. It was great waste of flour, because enormous quantities were left on tables by people who had naturally begun on a slice, but could not finish it. Sometimes it was sour and sometimes it was bitter, and sometimes it was both.

In 1918 it got better, and every here and there bakeries slyly started making fancy-bread, with an absent-minded air of not noticing what they were doing. That was put a stop to, but not for long. Indeed, the bread-regulations fluctuated all over France. In one place nothing but household bread was baked; in the next, there were all kinds of roll, tinned-loaves, and table-twists.

Flour we had according to our own wishes. That is, we could save on our consumption of bread, and get half the weight of flour to which each bread-ticket entitled us. It thus depended on the wishes of the household whether one could have home-made pastry or biscuits. Now and then there was a shortage for a few days, when the bakers only had enough for their bread-making, but this never grew serious. It was grey stuff, and perhaps it was the one thing the housewife did not hoard, since it would not keep

more than a fortnight. It also refused to rise, even with baking-powder in it, and altogether made itself as unattractive as possible.

I have a note written at the time, regarding prices and restrictions, which it is interesting to refer to now.

"Every day something is difficult to get, and all the time everything is more expensive than any one can afford. We have difficulties with milk and eggs and butter, and have not seen potatoes for a fortnight —because the authorities told our patriotic merchants that they must charge reasonable prices for them.

"Vegetables are, in the words of my cook, 'difficult beyond all.' A tiny cauliflower costs two francs; sevenpennyworth of carrots have to be looked for with an opera-glass, turnips are equally coy, and, as for cabbage, you can just as well pretend it has partridge cooked with it, for it costs as if it had!

"People in England wail about high prices—and wouldn't know one if they met it in the street. They have some weedy striplings certainly, but with us there are giants walking the earth, and every day they grow a bit more.

"Forty-seven shillings a ton for coal in England! We pay eight pounds ten (and then have but little more than half your allowance!). Wood is seven pounds ten. Our allowance of paraffin is a quart per family per month—and it costs five shillings a pint! Butter is four-and-six a pound. Tinned food is outrageous in price. Game is much cheaper than it was last year. You can get a nice little pheasant for twelve-and-six, for instance, and this time last year it cost at least a sovereign. Hares are cheaper, too; I saw a very large one yesterday that was only twenty-two shillings, including the smell, of which there was lots.

"Yet these are not actual restrictions, and letters from home make it clear that even now Paris dwellers are receiving a good deal of sympathy, to which they have absolutely no right, on the question of food. How it is done we do not know, but we are very certain that there is plenty of every sort of food, mostly very dear, but of excellent quality. The bread varies, and is often uneatable, or nearly so, by reason of its sourness. Toasted, however (over gas, which is certainly very bad and very dear), it is quite palatable. Three days a week the butchers close, and no meat may be served in restaurants. On these days, however, hard cheese may be had in public places, which is forbidden, as soft cheese is permanently, on all other days The result of the soft cheese restriction is to make it available in quantities to the householder, and of a quality which the domestic caterer sighed for in vain until now. Camembert, which was half a crown a box a few months ago, is now hawked round the streets at sevenpence-halfpenny.

"Strawberries also are cheap. Everything else is dear, and an attempt to make green-grocers sell new potatoes at fourpence halfpenny a pound has banished them from the market.

"If you haven't a sugar-card you can't get coal. Such is the decree. So, if you have spoken the truth about sugar, and admitted that you eat away from home, and therefore haven't a sugar-card, you are thereby deprived of the privilege of warming yourself at home. The moral is that you ought to have lied about the sugar, and sold your allowance at high price to your neighbours. At least, I cannot think of any other moral, unless it is that you ought to live in a hot country where sugar oozes from trees and you don't want to be any warmer than you are."

Paris was very far from gay during the intense cold of the winters of 1916 and 1917. It caused widespread and acute wretchedness, intensified by the occasional complete absence of any supply of coal in the city. The situation became so serious that the municipality decided to distribute its small stock to people who themselves came to fetch it at the depôts. The distribution was very badly arranged, and in the arctic cold Paris was dotted with queues of women shuddering in the street waiting for hours their turn to be served, and not infrequently having to go away empty-handed. One woman, after waiting five hours, received a ticket promising her a sack of coal in a fortnight.

If one dwells on the difficulties of life in Paris, it is with no idea of grumbling; we only grumbled when we felt that, owing to mismanagement, our sufferings were not being adequately translated into punishment for the Boche. On some points we had this feeling quite strongly—the lack of coal, for instance. "We know the coal is there, and we grumble loudly because we cannot get it. Coal merchants are now refusing to sell at the new price (£6 a ton), because they say their men won't deliver it unless paid very high wages, and because, when they do condescend to take a coal-cart out, they sell its contents by auction to the passers-by! It is certainly not by the class which delivers goods here that France has earned her name for civilisation and polish. Even in peace-time they are a set of disobliging, rough-spoken robbers; just now such as are left of them are keen on making a profit of the public distress.

"The first day that coal was sold in the Opéra court-yard a crowd of a thousand people assembled to buy. It was sold in twenty-pound lots, and people had to wait for hours for that much—and then many of them

did not get any. At least, however, they were not standing in the icy wind. One woman died of cold while standing in line to wait for her coal outside a shop. Coal-carts have been taken by storm in some quarters of Paris, the people paying strictly for what they had, but refusing to allow the whole load to be delivered to one person. On the other hand, a certain branch of a certain Ministry the other day had twenty tons of black diamonds delivered to it. They came in military waggons, which were wanted elsewhere, and therefore dumped the fuel in the road. Although it is a highly aristocratic and expensive neighbourhood, that coal had to be guarded by armed troops. No wonder! Twenty tons! Meanwhile, at the Sorbonne, the very passages and all the amphitheatres, even when empty, are beautifully warm; but wretched boy and girl students in an annexe have no heating of any kind, and when they asked for some the Rector, in his warm room, wrote to them to say that their request was anti-patriotic.

"We cannot get lamp-oil, candles are scarce, loaf-sugar has gone and other varieties are rare, vegetables do not appear since the great frost, and grocers threaten a shortage of macaroni and all other pastes of that kind. It grows colder day by day, and when a snowstorm and a dark yellow fog coincided one afternoon the exiled Londoner suffered all the pangs of nostalgia.

"The theatres, cinemas, cafés, restaurants are all crowded. It is cheaper to eat out than at home, especially as one gets light and heat thrown in. The hotels will shortly be packed, as very many families are about to shut their flats and instal themselves in public hostelries. This will throw domestic servants out of work in lamentable fashion. But we are all as cheerful as we are chilly, and that is saying a

great deal, and we believe in the Offensive to Come as children believe in Christmas."

In the winter of 1917 we were rationed for gas, electric light, and shortly afterwards for coal. For the latter commodity the ordinary amount allowed to a household of four was half a ton a month. This meant that the kitchen fire took nearly all the allowance, and any other fires had to be kept going with wood. The expense of this plan was the chief of its many discomforts. Until coal was rationed its prices had been beyond belief—the top price I heard of any one paying was seventeen pounds a ton. It was very scarce, and, as it was a terribly hard winter, those who could scrape the money together anyhow simply had to pay it. After the rationing, the price hovered between six and eight pounds.

Wood was never rationed, but it cost five to six pounds a ton, and during the hard frost at the beginning of 1918 there was a transport muddle, and we could not get it delivered, although the timber-yards of Paris were full of it. It was maddening to see huge piles of logs a mile or two away from one's empty grates, and to be unable to transport any of them. We lived in coats—several of them—and camped in one room. Even with screens placed close round the hearth, two chairs and the bridge-table almost in the fire, it was impossible to keep warm on our scanty fuel. I have before now changed places at the aforesaid bridge-table during the meal served upon it, because, although my right side was not warm, my left was absolutely freezing.

People living in houses with central heating were worse off than the rest. The crisis took Paris by surprise, and so did the terrible winter, the worst since 1895—for six weeks the thermometer wavered between 20° and 10° Fahr.: after a little while, the

landlords of centrally heated houses found themselves unable to get sufficient fuel for their pipes, and, as their tenants had naturally laid in no supplies on their own account, they were left shivering even more pitifully than the rest of us, who at least had some stock in hand. At last we came to a time when there was neither coal, wood, nor oil to be had, and the thermometer continued to gambol gleefully upon Fahrenheit's lowest rungs. All attempts at social life stopped. One could not invite friends to spend the evening in an ice-house. If one got hold of a hundred-weight of wood, one rang up intimates and said: "We're going to have a fire to-night. Do come round." And if they replied that they had already lighted one, we went round to them, and they came to us next day.

The cinemas and theatres reaped the benefit of this condition of things, for every afternoon and evening they were crowded out with people who were in search of warmth and light far more than of amusement. The only comfortable way to spend the day was to work in bed, with hot-water-bottles, wadded jackets, and motorist's mittens, until after luncheon; go to two cinemas; dine in a restaurant; and come home to bed. For this, of course, money and leisure were necessary, and they also were scarce. Besides, after a short time, the Government closed the cinemas and theatres four days a week, in order to economise the coal they burned.

Whatever benefit could be reaped from the small stocks of coal in hand, the poor had. Nearly all the available fuel was distributed to those in receipt of public assistance.

As to our rationing in gas and electricity, it was a farce. We were allowed two-thirds of our average expenditure, but when one overran the prescribed

limits all that happened was that the man who came to register the meter's showing shook his head, and said we had burned too much. One can stand quite a lot of other people's heads being shaken. After a month or two nobody even troubled to shake a head; the rationing of these commodities died a natural death.

At one period in the summer of 1917 the Minister of Munitions decided, through the all-powerful medium of a decree signed by Monsieur Poincaré, that the gas supply should be cut off for 13 hours a day; that is to say, for 7½ hours during the night, from half-past eight to half-past ten in the morning, and from two until five-thirty in the afternoon. The circulation of hot water in hotels and private houses was only allowed on Saturdays and Sundays. This decree, save for the last clause, was immediately rendered null as regards Paris and its suburbs, because a deputation went to call on the proper authorities. The deputation, of course, thought it had its way, but what happened was that private consumers of gas discovered that the pipes of their stoves and their baths supplied, as they still supply, a vapour which, on being lighted, makes a flame, and costs exactly the same per metre as real gas, but utterly refuses to do anything in the heating line. Brookes' soap that won't wash clothes is nothing to the Paris gas which won't heat anything.

It was curious to go from French restaurants to English ones. In the latter, as in the private household, a regulation was a thing to be kept. In the former, it was always a breakable object, which public spirit required one to attack. This was the odder, in that the restrictions were so much less in Paris than in London. When our menus were regulated, so that we might not eat too much, we were allowed

to have oysters, soup, or *hors-d'œuvres*; two other courses at pleasure; sweet, fruit, and three ounces of bread. Until quite late in the war butter could be served, also cream. Every sort of drink was freely available, but women and soldiers were not (officially) allowed alcohol. In most places they got their liqueurs served in coffee-cups, and cocktails did not rank as alcoholic drinks.

The women munition workers in France, as in England, finding themselves suddenly well paid and without domestic duties, in some cases followed the example shown them by their men and turned to spirituous liquor for amusement. Of course, the men were very much shocked. The labourer who has never accustomed his wife to seeing him sober on Saturdays is appalled to discover that she has tried for herself how much fun may be got out of what he has always claimed as an amusement to which he had a divine right. More was done to check women doing this than in a hundred years of legislation has ever been attempted to prevent drunkenness among men. An order came into force in France by which no boy under eighteen and no woman might be served in cafés, restaurants, wine-shops, or pastry-cooks' with anything alcoholic above a certain very low degree. One of the effects of this rule was that no woman could have a lemon squash with a little Angostura in it, which in hot weather is one of the most hygienic drinks one can take. Another effect was that any woman accompanied by a man could drink as much alcohol as she liked so long as he ordered it for his own consumption and she had the tact to drink it at a moment when not too many people were looking at her!

Another restriction which was decreed in the autumn of 1918 was an attempt to combat the rising prices in

he restaurants by decreeing that each should arrange meal whereon one could dine or lunch at the inlusive price of twenty francs. This was a great train on the courage of civilians. I noted at the ime that, though there were still amongst us people o extravagant, or profiteers so shameless, as to go ut to dine in restaurants, "I have not yet heard f anybody so intrepid as to ask for the prescribed wenty-franc meal at any of the chief restaurants f Paris. Should this hero exist I should love to know him, but I cannot say how much I should dislike going out to dine with him. We know that the twenty-franc meal exists, because the Government has said that it shall. Having created it, it is, however, extremely doubtful if the Government has asked for it and seen that it was good. We have a pleasing story, which we all hope against hope may be true, of three British officers who went to a quite quiet restaurant of Paris and had fish, chicken, one bottle of Chablis, and coffee, and were faced by a bill of £10. They paid it without sign of emotion, but on leaving one of them said they would like to come back with some friends the following night. In consultation with the *maître d'hôtel*, he thereupon ordered the best dinner for ten that the establishment could provide. The next night ten of the hungriest British officers to be found by ardent exploration arrived for dinner. They had two helpings of everything, they enjoyed their wine, they finished with coffee and Napoleon brandy, and then they put on their coats and went. The *maître d'hôtel*, bowing out the first nine, detained the tenth to ask if he would not like the bill for the dinner. 'The dinner?' said he. 'But I paid for that last night!'

"We all believe in the £10 dinner for three, but we may only hope that the ten hungry Englishmen are

true. Partridge at present sells five francs retail; it is charged twenty francs in the restaurants, and they buy wholesale. 'C'est peut-être la guerre, mais ce n'est pas magnifique.'"

One of the more amusing features of our life in Paris at that time was the coming into fashion of presents in kind. Bachelors who were used in peace-time to bring little offerings of flowers or sweets to their hostess, or, indeed, did not trouble about these gentle amenities, now appeared laden with the fruits of the earth, having a great doubt as to whether otherwise in due time we should be able to enjoy them. In one fortnight I received from different visitors a bottle of whisky (very rare), a bottle of gin (priceless, the cocktail is almost extinct), two vegetable marrows, a pound of sugar, and six logs of wood. Nobody can deny that before the war these offerings would have been considered a little odd, if not discourteous, but now they acquired a value which made younger hostesses almost doubtful whether they might accept them. "It is too good of you, Mr. So-and-so, but I fear my husband would not like me to accept these delightful logs." "How very good of you, Mr. Something Else, but you know I fear—John is so jealous—that I must return your two beautiful marrows."

Dress came under restrictions, of course; but these were not severe, and were heralded by the usual series of "appeals" and "recommendations" to the public. The difficulties first began to be felt in necessities. By the end of 1917 woollen fabrics had risen to fearsome prices; it was impossible to get durable serge or cloth for less than thirty shillings or two pounds a yard. After the fall of Riga linen also became scarce, and sheets that cost thirty-three or thirty-four shillings before the war then cost six

pounds—and have risen steadily ever since. Silk, of course, soon went up in price, although it was never scarce, thanks to Lyons having escaped the fate of the occupied northern textile districts. Paris dressmakers decided not to use more than four and a half yards of any woollen material in one dress. The price of cloth immediately took a mysterious stride in advance, which suggested that the manufacturers meant to make their profit, in any case.

Dyes were another subject of difficulty; many colours could not be had at all, and every big shop hung a placard in its dress-material department to say that no dye could be guaranteed. Black was far more expensive than other colours, very naturally, because for two years no one had worn anything else, even when not in mourning, unless it were the very darkest blue or brown. Now and then in the summer a woman would appear in the street in pale fawn-colour or a girl in white, but they were objects of much attention and of much criticism.

Yet, side by side with the sober clothing of the multitude, and the restrictions on their necessities, there was an orgy of luxury. In five years of life in Paris, including two mad tango-seasons, I had never seen the big drapery shops here such seething, pushing, fighting, scrambling masses of hot female purchasers as in 1917. The made-up costumes and hats, if expensive, were quiet in tone and make in most cases; but all the small accessories of the toilet were sumptuous to a degree, and under-linen—or under-silk, or under-net, as the case may be—could not have been filmier, more be-laced, and be-ribboned if we had been in full millennium. It made me wish that gate-money could be taken at all these establishments by the State—not to get in, but to get out—ten per cent. on all purchases, if not more. Of course

we must have clothing, but we could, every one of us, have done without most of the things on which money was spent by the afternoon crowds of idle women in the big shopping districts.

I find in my diary a note that:

"We are well on our way back to the sumptuary laws of the Middle Ages; and a good thing too. It makes one furious to see the most expensive tissues, fragile things that will not stand half a dozen times of wearing, costing endless time and labour and money, displayed in the shops for the wives of profiteers. It is good for trade, of course, but the welfare of trade, although it may be important, is not the first concern of any of us; or, if it is, it is just as well that somebody should suggest an alteration in our mental plan. At any rate, we are going to be given a standard shoe made of standard leather, and sold at a standard price, and a cloth to match. It is only the thin edge of the wedge, but, once people have accepted in principle such an innovation as this, they are deprived of the privilege of subsequent criticism. Perhaps the 'drap national' will become 'the thing.' One never can tell. People are found to wear airman's hats, to turn the Croix de Guerre into brooches, to have their sleeves embroidered with imitations of wound stripes. Khaki, horizon-blue, hospital-blue, are sought after by a certain public for their costumes and summer frocks. Others like to buy sweets put up in cardboard imitating shells and grenades and trench helmets—and aren't choked by the sweets, either! Anyway, let us hope we shall not have our national cloth nobbled by the fashionable dressmaker for the ladies of the Argentine and the Goldine."

In the long run this orgy of buying led us to that futile nuisance, the luxury tax. It yielded very poorly, was expensive to organise and collect, and fell



THE HOPE OF FRANCE, 1916.

From the drawing by Bernard Naudin, reproduced by kind permission of R. Hellen, 125 Boulevard St. Germain, Paris.

most hardly on the moderate consumer, as England found when she tried to follow the French example. There was no fixed rule as to marking the object taxed, so that in many shops it was only at the pay-desk that one realised that most of the articles purchased were taxed. With cynical indifference to our feelings, the Government fixed on April 1 for the first operation of the new taxes! We were naturally indignant at being made fools of as well as having to pay for all our necessities!

"We have to pay eleven shillings for ten shillingsworth of scent, or brandy, or silk underwear. Poor us! We have to take our bread tickets to restaurants, unless we happen to know that the chosen eating-house is of those who ignore such rules. At the larger restaurants we have to pay eleven shillings instead of ten for five shillingsworth of food. At tea-rooms the same terrible state of affairs exists.

"The regulation ordains, also, that bills shall be taken in the lump, so that if five people eat together and one of them eats less than six francs' worth he cannot have the cheese which his abstinence should have earned him. The same with drinks. Two men who share a bottle of champagne involve their third friend in paying a tax on his half-bottle of mineral water!

"Men must pay on any suit costing more than seven pounds—which they all do; women are allowed ten pounds for a costume. Four-and-six for a bottle of wine, two pounds for boots, three pounds for pyjamas, one-and-threepence for handkerchiefs, thirty-three shillings for a dog, and eight-and-six for a cat, are the limits allowed to go untaxed.

"Silk underclothing is always a luxury, and so is perfume. In furniture we may pay sixty pounds for a suite, and if we are so mad as to want a gramo-

phone we may only give six pounds for it, although, for some inscrutable reason which will be regretted by a number of people, upright pianos go free!

"We are contemplating having to eat our food off enamel ware, for to replace the smallest piece of the dinner service that has been the pride of our hearts we must now pay a tax, if the whole set cost more than £7 10*s.* in the beginning.

"If you decide to be your own dressmaker and need a pair of scissors that are warranted to cut, you must be prepared to pay extra for this; though a knife to cut your throat with is apparently considered a 'necessity' and has escaped taxation. Alarm clocks are a luxury, in spite of their unpopularity in the mornings, when they hardly seem even a necessity.

"We rather stick out with profiteers, and they certainly add to the gaiety of the nations assembled in this queer war city. You never know when you are going to meet them next, nor who they will be, nor (particularly) what they will wear. I sat next a lady in the Underground the other day who was loudly announcing her disgust at having to be in it instead of in her car. She wore a black, broadtail coat, embroidered nearly everywhere in gold; where there was not gold there were slabs of black fox fur. Round her neck was one string of diamonds and another of amber beads the size of small eggs. Her hat consisted of one entire blue and yellow parakeet. Her hair was a great deal yellower than the dawn, and apple blossom would have had to blush before it began to resemble her cheeks. And yet she was not anything but a most respectable lower middle-class lady, with a very unattractive husband, who was mostly nose and watch-chain, and I am still wondering whether she hoped she looked like a whole duchess or a half-lady.

"I saw a perfectly delightful profiteeress at a fashionable restaurant here the other day. She had one of those simple little frocks of black satin that cost more than a coronation robe, because simplicity is so dear; she had a string of pearls that would have made Aladdin's mouth water; she had a simple black hat with a few 90f. ospreys in it; she had a Labrador of ermine, and a Siberia of sable; and she had about the dirtiest white kid gloves that it has ever been my evil fortune to behold. We all know that accidents can happen to white gloves between home and restaurant, but these were dirty with a settled grime. As the old Yorkshire proverb says: 'There's nowt so queer as folks.'"

Laundry has been very difficult; the laundries are mostly situated at Issy, the Kensal Green or Battersea of Paris, and transport was a problem for them. Oil and soap became scarce, too, which was hardly surprising, since the freight of Copra alone from India to Marseilles rose from 35 francs a ton to seven hundred.

Boats were hard to find, and for copra, as for other things, the route to be traversed was infested by the poison-Huns. We had to pay half a crown a kilo for soap that used to cost sixpence; and even then sometimes it could not be had. So our laundries closed down, or only took washing once a month, and when we rushed to supplement our store of household and personal linen we were faced with a 200 per cent. increase in price and a 100 per cent. decrease in quality.

Even when the laundries did do the work, they did it very badly, and used chemicals which utterly destroyed the linen. They put up their prices sixty per cent., and then took to adding an additional ten per cent. to the bill.

Yet, when one comes to examine these things, there was very little real hardship or scarcity, with the two exceptions of sugar and coal. The coal shortage, so far as it affected the public directly, was temporary, although it seems likely that we may meet it again this winter. On the whole, the long purse has managed to deal with the long price. At present prices are really appalling, and every one has had to simplify his mode of life who could. But, looking back on rationing in Paris, one cannot say that we ever came within hailing distance of England's hardships and abstinence. Those who chose to spend the money could always get plenty of food, and that of the best. If condensed milk was lacking one week, probably butter was available. We had momentary famines in butter and milk and eggs, but these were never officially rationed. We were astoundingly lucky, and when I got letters from people at home whom I knew had not tasted fresh meat for a fortnight, commiserating us on the long list of restrictions they had read of in the papers, I felt that it was a thousand pities that England did not trumpet forth her regulations as loudly as did France; and, louder even than that, the amazing fact that she kept them!

CHAPTER VII

PARIS AND THE FRONT: A MILITARY SURVEY

It is almost impossible to understand the successive moods of Paris, and her political changes, without considering the events on the Front. In order to do this one wants to refer to a summary of those events; and here it is.

Paris, through the varying stages of the war, reflected the changing fortunes of the Front, in an odd, distorted manner, which was discreditable neither to Paris nor to the Front. When things went well on the Marne, in Flanders, or on the Aisne, the boulevards carped and criticised. The victory—truly enough—was never a complete victory. What the boulevards wanted was a "break-through." The Germans must be hurled out of France and beyond the Rhine, if the war was to be won. What were the generals thinking of to imagine that an advance of a couple of hundred yards or even a couple of miles helped matters? This temper was perhaps never more evident than during the battle of the Somme in 1916 and the Battle of Champagne in 1917, when at least the allied flags were advancing and German prisoners were being brought in daily in thousands. On the other hand, in time of disaster, when the enemy was at her gates, or later, when his engines were battering in her roofs, Paris was at her best, her gayest, her firmest. During the Marne week in September 1914, when those who had the money to go, and also had not the faith to remain, had left her; when the Germans

were at Chantilly and none but a handful of grey-headed officers at the Ministry of War realised what Joffre was doing, the odd two millions of people who remained in Paris were as cheerful as a holiday crowd.

In fact, on the Sunday on which the battle of the Ourcq was won, when the town was preparing itself for a siege which could never have been sustained; when herds of disorientated cattle were lowing in the Bois de Boulogne and the gates of the Vincennes Park were being hastily locked with barriers of felled trees, over which any decently trained hunter could have leaped; when there was no sign of help in sight, and no good news had come since the first of August, the working people of Paris enjoyed their Sunday holiday with as much zest as if the Boche had been beyond his own borders. By the next Sunday the Germans were in full retreat on the Aisne, and the holiday-makers from Paris were pursuing them up the valley of the Marne to Meaux, and beyond it to the battle-field, then littered with German dead.

The French had already been decently buried, and those who came back from the battle-field brought only tales of slain Germans and of the débris of a defeated army which was covering the breadth of France from Compiègne to Verdun. In those days a wind of hope blew through Paris. No one knew that the Aisne would prove an impassable barrier. We were but learning the trade of war, which every age of man has to learn anew. But in September 1914 no one doubted that the Germans would be driven beyond the Rhine before another September had ripened the grapes of France.

Then began the long period of the "war years," during which none but those whom the State delights to honour could see anything of the battle-fields, and the only souvenirs of war were brought back to Paris by *poilus* in blue or British soldiers in khaki.

The British colony in Paris is a scattered one, and during the war it was not a wealthy one; but it did its best to make the stay of the British soldier in Paris, whether he were a General, or a Tommy with the mud of the trenches still on his uniform, as bright and as interesting as it could be made.

For a long time this hospitality was left to the individual. It was only in 1917 that the Leave Club was founded, which was officially placed in charge of the fortunes of Tommy on leave. Some of the associations which did their best—and a noble best it was—for Tommy had the most extraordinary notions of privacy. I was told by the representative of one of them that they were at their wits' end for invitations for the two thousand men per week who came up on leave. But when I suggested that this institution should say so through the medium of the Paris *Daily Mail*, which all through the war was at the service of any such enterprise, he replied that that would not be in keeping with his captain's notion of the traditions of the institution. There was not a British family in the Paris district who would not have welcomed Tommy to their house; there must have been at the very least 30 per cent. of French households in which English was spoken more or less well, where Tommy would have been an honoured guest; but the extraordinary dread of publicity overcame the natural impulses of hospitality, and that was partly the reason why the Leave Club became an urgent necessity.

The tremendous success it achieved was by no means entirely due to the fact that such an establishment was desperately badly wanted, and might most usefully have been started three years before. Any Leave Club decently run would have been successful, but the actual one has been carried on in a liberal and enterprising spirit which cannot be too much praised.

Before it opened, one met Tommy prowling on the boulevards, bored with himself and the world, a ready prey for the first audacious hunter who wanted his money. He did not know where to go, nor how to get there; he did not know where to sleep or to eat, and he very frequently got drunk, simply because sitting outside a café having drinks was more amusing and less tiring than walking about. I once saw an enormous Highlander, all his kit on the ground beside him, obviously fresh from the Front, fast asleep outside a café. It cannot be said that he looked beautiful, for he slept with his mouth open and snored in Gaelic, or so it seemed by the complicated noises he made. But on the little table in front of him the passers-by made oblation. There were several *bocks*, a good many chocolates, an evening paper, and a bunch of violets. If the donors remained to see him wake up they must have been immensely rewarded; I never saw a bigger Scot nor one half so embarrassed. The violets overcame the giant like a bunch of little Davids. He caught them up, and gathered together his kit and the chocolates, then, embarrassment or no embarrassment, he slowly and earnestly drank the *bocks*, while the admiring crowd applauded.

But there were thousands of Tommies who did not fall among friends. The Leave Club caters for such men; feeds them, houses them, banks their money for them, amuses them, gives them billiards and gramophones and books; takes them round Paris; writes letters for them; photographs them; gives them dances; above all, gives them no official greeting, but that of a friend. This it has done for two years, and is still doing for the soldier who remains in or near Paris. Its services have been so valuable that when our armies went into Germany, Miss Decima Moore, who had been the mainspring of

the Paris Club, was asked by the military authorities to start a similar institution in Cologne.

The year 1915 wore itself to an end without any great change for Paris. The war had become a permanent factor; in the life of the city it seemed as if it could never be removed. The demand for shells from the Front brought a vast influx of middle-aged workers, mostly French, but in part Belgian, Italian, and Spanish, into Paris, and gradually the population of the town, counting its own uttermost dependencies, grew to almost double the number recorded in the books of the City Council in 1914. Huts multiplied into hamlets, hamlets into townships, and villages into suburbs; and all of them thrilled, hummed, and roared with the noise of the machinery making explosives, shells, bombs, grenades, aeroplane engines, rifles, helmets, and all the equipment of the *poilu*.

News came of the German offensive in the Ypres salient, of the appearance of gas on the battle-fields, of the failure of the French offensive at Arras, which will be remembered, when the history of the war is written, as among the bloodiest, most disastrous, and most heroic of the conflicts between man and man.

In September came the offensive in Champagne, supported by the British attack at Loos, both of which proved to be costly and glorious failures. For years now the legend has haunted the land that in Champagne the Germans were at their last gasp, and were packing up for a general retreat when the tide of the French onslaught began to ebb. History will never judge justly the battles of this war. Most of the French soldiers who fought in that battle still believe that a break-through could have been made. The Germans are confident that it could never have been made, and the French High Command, at the time, agreed with them. I make no attempt to fore-

stall the verdict of history. What is certain is that the failure of the September offensive, which is supposed to have cost a quarter of a million casualties, threw a pall of gloom over France, which was at its blackest in Paris. The winter brought no news to brighten the atmosphere. In January the British left Gallipoli, frankly acknowledging their failure. Three months later Kut surrendered, and in February the Germans had launched their first sledge hammer-blow against Verdun. The demonic contest in front of Verdun endured until July 12, when the Germans, having made their last effort, withdrew their reserves to meet the Franco-British offensive on the Somme. By this time France was thoroughly sick of the war. The United States, as represented in the Allied Press, seemed if anything to favour the Germans. The narrowness of the issue in arms between the Germano-Magyars and the Three Allies in August 1916 had become so clear that the man in the street in Paris seriously hoped that the Rumanian Army would definitively stabilise the balance in our favour. A few weeks sufficed to dispose of that hope.

At the end of the year President Wilson (as now seems clear, at the instigation of Count Bernstorff) launched his celebrated invitation to the belligerent nations to make peace. It was couched in language differing not greatly from that in which the Peace Conference this summer called the Rumanian Government to order, and naturally it had no result. The only effective reply it elicited was the declaration of the unrestricted submarine war from Berlin. President Wilson, whose patience was exhausted, countered with war upon Germany. Britain estimated correctly the power of America—perhaps because the lessons of 1775 and of 1812 had never faded from the memory of the British peoples. France,

which for political purposes is Paris, for a moment despaired of help, even from America. The Germans said openly that America could do no more for the Allies than she was already doing, and in the spring of 1916 there were numbers of Frenchmen, including some high in office and in public renown, who believed the same thing, and who had begun to ask openly whither the slaughter in the trenches in Flanders, on the Aisne, in the Champagne, in Lorraine and in the Vosges, could possibly lead.

At the end of 1916 Joffre, now Marshal of France, resigned his post of Commander-in-Chief of all the French Armies in every theatre of war and was replaced by General Nivelle. The fault of Joffre was that he was old, and had not won the war. His successor, Nivelle, whose mother was an Englishwoman, at the moment ranked high among the victorious generals of the French Army. He had greatly distinguished himself in the defence of Verdun. He is an artillerist, and, perhaps, the most gifted exponent of his profession now living. But in war technical proficiency is not the last word. Character counts even for more, and had a plébiscite been taken of the Army it would without doubt have voted, almost to a man, for Pétain. With the turn of the year came the change of the Government. M. Ribot became Prime Minister, and M. Painlevé Minister of War. The latter has since said that he held out as long as he could for the appointment of Pétain to the post of Commander-in-Chief. His colleagues insisted on General Nivelle, and carried their point. They had no particular love for General Nivelle, but they knew him as a man whose life was absorbed by the details of his profession. Pétain, who began the war as a colonel, was the general who saved Verdun, and he was a man of whom it could be predicted that

he would accept the chief command only on condition that his orders were obeyed and that the Government, which, by the way, represented a Chamber elected in the spring of 1914, should leave him a free hand. Of the two men, Nivelle, clearly, could be more easily got rid of. He, therefore, was chosen.

Meanwhile although Paris had sunk into a despondent mood, British officers, coming to Paris on leave, were in the highest spirits. They knew that the battle of the Somme had been stopped by the advent of winter, when our army was within a few days' fighting of the mastery of the heights which dominate the plain between the Somme and the Oise. They knew that if the battle was renewed they would most certainly break the Boche line as soon as fighting was possible, and the breaking of the Boche line then seemed the final object of the war. As we know, now, the Boche had perceived his danger and made all preparation for a hasty retreat to the Hindenburg Line, before we could attack him.

It must be admitted that the movement was conceived and executed with consummate skill. There was a bewildering week when the British *communiqués* reported daily that the Germans were falling back on the Somme " under our pressure." Unfortunately it was not until we saw Bapaume in flames that the Anglo-French High Command realised that the enemy was really and seriously in retreat. Preparations had been made for a combined Anglo-French onslaught on the German lines between the Somme and the Oise. The whole winter had been spent by the Allies in discussing and preparing. Creil had, by the labour of German prisoners, been transformed into one of the greatest railway centres in Europe, in order to feed the French armies which were to burst in the Noyon salient. The attack was never made. Warned

by the flames of Bapaume that the Germans were really forsaking the lines they had held so long, the French leaped from their trenches only to find the rearguards of a retreating army in front of them. The enemy had fallen back to a new front which came to be known as the Hindenburg line. They had abandoned an area, the equivalent of two English counties, in which they had left nothing but villages wrecked by explosives, mangled roads, orchards levelled to the ground, and bridges choking the rivers they had once spanned.

On the new Front, which naturally had been selected with a view to profiting by every hill, stream, wood, and marsh, there was no possibility of attack. The generals revised their plans to meet the new situation. Sir Douglas Haig, in accordance with the original plans, opened the campaign with the capture of Vimy Ridge. A few days later, on April 16, General Nivelle launched a tremendous blow against the enemy's position along the Chemin des Dames and the western Champagne. The following day he hurled the right wing of the attacking army on the lines the Germans had held for nearly three years between Rheims and the Suippes. Both attacks failed, in spite of the utmost valour and self-sacrifice on the part of the troops. The reasons of the failure have never been made clear. It is known that the parliamentary delegates at Nivelle's advanced Headquarters took fright the first day at the terrific loss sustained by the attacking troops, and that before the battle was two days old Nivelle had received orders from Paris which left him no choice but to break off the operations as soon as he could. The battle, which should have been a break-through, was stopped by May 1, and the French papers were filled with accounts of the prisoners and guns captured

and of the deep dent beaten into the German defences in the Champagne.

The announcement of the failure, for, however carefully camouflaged, the fact of failure could not be hidden from a public which had long since learned how to construe official *communiqués*, provoked a storm of fury and disappointment throughout France. General Nivelle was removed from his post. He and the illustrious Mangin were even brought before a military committee of enquiry to answer for their non-success. Both officers were acquitted, and a year later Mangin returned to the Front to win imperishable renown; but meanwhile both the Army and the capital were left in a state of anger and unrest which reduced the fighting power of France to the lowest ebb.

Neither the English nor the French Press was allowed to publish what was then common knowledge in France, and matter of open rejoicing in Germany, but there is no longer a reason to conceal what occurred.

In the month following the first battle of the Chemin des Dames the French Army went through a crisis which brought us, in the view of many shrewd observers, within sight of final defeat. Bolshevism was not yet master of Russia, but the revolution had already transformed the Russian Army into a mob. From that quarter no help was possible. The Americans were still on the far side of the Atlantic, and the German submarines that month achieved their record of destruction. Nivelle had failed, and the legend, which was industriously spread by the mischief-makers, that the French commanders had allowed their men to be butchered in hundreds of thousands without reasonable hope of success, shook the moral of the Army to its foundations.

Owing to a mistake, which has never been satisfactorily explained, the Chamber was told that the

number of killed and wounded was twice as high as the real figure. In every café, in every *bistro*, and in every concierge's lodge, the figures were trebled and quadrupled, and the wildest stories were circulated about mutiny on the Front. Unfortunately these latter had a real foundation. The failure, after so many months of bloody endeavour, hardship, and hope deferred, coupled with the dismissal of the commanding generals, created in the rank and file of the Army a state of mind from which the pro-German anarchist press was quick to profit. The men had a concrete grievance in that all leave had been suspended, of which those who had to answer for mutiny made the most in their defence. For obvious reasons no full account of what occurred has ever been published, but it is a fact that small groups of hot-heads mutinied in a good many regiments, including some of the most famous fighting corps of the French Army. Fortunately the mutiny met with no real backing among the men. Frank explanation sufficed to show nearly all of them the frightful disaster for which they were steering. Order was restored, and the worst offenders were handed over to the courts-martial. A few of them were shot.

During these days the spirit of revolt was abroad in Paris, as on the Front. The soldiers coming on leave, who arrived necessarily either at the Gare du Nord or the Gare de l'Est, were met by gangs of professional agitators, many of whom were in receipt, either directly or indirectly, of German pay, and the danger of rebellion in the streets of the capital was so grave that the authorities had to interfere and clear the approaches to the stations of all except those who had a reasonable ground for going into them.

The crisis was brief. Duty and the sound reason inherent in the French people prevailed over the voices

which urged a disastrous peace with Germany at any price. General Pétain (now Marshal of France) had taken over the supreme command of the Army. His first step was to order that every soldier had a right to a week's leave, exclusive of time spent in travelling, three times a year, and he made it clear that in no circumstances whatever should there be any departure from that rule. Within a month of his arrival at General Headquarters at Compiègne, Pétain had banished the spectre of revolt from the Army. It was a feat for which the allied peoples owe him an eternal debt of gratitude, although at the time they hardly realised the extent of the danger. But the moment of depression and weakness exacted its price. The French Army never knew a Caporetto, but the Minister of War, M. Painlevé, was obliged to give a public assurance to the Chamber that there should be no more fruitless adventures costing a heavy toll of human life, and that the energies of the Army should be husbanded till the moment came for the attack which should bring victory.

At the time this was interpreted as a public censure of the Headquarters staff, and there can be no doubt that it was intended to be such. Nevertheless, it announced a policy which Pétain faithfully carried out. During the rest of the year the French armies on the Chemin des Dames, and at Verdun, were deliberately given as much fighting as the High Command thought was necessary to keep the moral of the men at fighting pitch, and no more. Throughout the summer of 1917 the battle of the Chemin des Dames was kept alive at a vast expense of labour, but at a relatively small cost of French lives. All the while Pétain was preparing the ground for the attack which was destined to sweep the enemy from the coveted ridge. It was delivered in the autumn, and resulted,

besides the gain of ground, in the capture of ten thousand prisoners.

In August an attack meticulously prepared in the same way cleared the Verdun Front, driving the Germans from the valley north of Douaumont and from the Mort Homme and Hill 304 on the left bank of the Meuse. At the end of the year practically the whole of the Verdun battle-field of 1916 was in our hands, and the French held the Chemin des Dames from end to end. No breach had been made in the German lines, but a series of local successes had been won which had restored the confidence of the *poilu* in his superiority as a man over the Germans, and in the ability of his commanders. The Army had reached the highest pitch of efficiency, and when the disaster of Caporetto made it imperative that French troops should be sent to Italy there was not a murmur in the Army which six months before had been on the edge of rebellion.

Meanwhile in Paris great changes had come about. M. Ribot had been dismissed. Painlevé, mathematician, bad Prime Minister, had followed him. The French people had perceived in time whither lukewarmness, as represented by M. Malvy, and active treason, as voiced by the *Bonnet Rouge* gang, were leading them. Clemenceau had risen in his place in the Senate and denounced the folly and dishonesty responsible for the mutinies of April 1917 in a speech which put one clear issue before the public mind. The answer was instant and final. The Ministry of M. Painlevé vanished like chaff before the wind. Clemenceau took the helm and the control of the armies, and a few weeks of his inspiring energy sufficed to screw the national spirit to a pitch which enabled it to meet, without flinching, the disasters of the following spring.

During 1917 Paris, and for that matter France, had been filling with American soldiers. A new element had come into the war, bringing with it new support and a new hope. The sight of the American khaki on the boulevards exorcised finally the spectre of Bolshevism in France. Misfortune dogged us during the winter. In Italy the Austro-German offensive drove our Allies back to the Piave. In Russia the last hope of help vanished, and the Germans were already demarcating kingdoms to be plotted out among the scions of the two Imperial Houses in Poland and Lithuania. No one doubted what the next spring would bring. At the end of January, when the weather turned mild and calm, the Germans showed their hands by detaching their aeroplane fleets from London to Paris. Every night those who lived along the valleys of the Oise and the Aisne heard the humming of the great high-powered machines high above them in the moon-lit blue. A couple of hours later they would be heard again on their homeward journey, having unloaded their cargoes of bombs upon Paris. The intention of the German High Command was clear. They meant to attack as soon as they were ready, and with the utmost possible force.

The French High Command decided rightly that the attack would come on the Arras-St. Quentin front. Complete victory there meant the opening of the shortest road to Paris, and the possibility of separating the French Army from the British, as in case of defeat the French and British Armies must inevitably retire on divergent lines, the French Army being fed from Paris and the British from Boulogne and the ports of the North.

The German air-fleet was directed on Paris during the month preceding the attack, and the month that followed it, in the hope of creating a panic in

the capital which would enable the Germans to make the utmost profit of the victory on which Ludendorff counted at the Front. As usual, the Germans misinterpreted the mentality of their enemy. Paris, which a year before had been on the verge of surrender, did not flinch as soon as it realised that it was directly attacked. Under the frenzied rush of fifty German divisions General Gough's army fell back. For days, during the time in which the First French Army under General Debeney was being brought from Lorraine, there was a gap many miles wide between the French and the British Armies. That gap was filled by troops and cavalry brought up at the highest speed of which men and horses were capable, and the German rush was so harassed and hindered by our aeroplane squadrons that, before German infantry could burst through it, the gap was closed and the Germans, if any of them had had the foresight to know it, had lost the war.

The Allied Governments, meanwhile, had learned a rude lesson. The defeat of Gough's army brought home to statesmen and peoples the fact that only the professional soldiers had up to then realised, namely, that our divided command was a constant hindrance to the success of our cause. By universal agreement General Foch, now Marshal of France, and Field Marshal of the British Army, was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the French, British, and American Armies in France, and the organisation was created which enabled us to oppose a single army and a single purpose to Ludendorff's formidable fighting machine.

In April the Germans made an attack in Flanders which was stopped after a large bulge had been made in the British line and the Kemmel had fallen into German hands. But the British Army refused positively to be driven into the sea, and Ludendorff

launched his next attack on the front held by the Belgian Army, hoping that he would there find troops opposing him who would be more easy to deal with. The attack was a costly failure. Not an inch of ground was taken from the Belgians. Indeed, those who knew the battle-field as it then was will realise that the Germans could not possibly advance against troops who were determined not to yield.

The Germans still possessed a large superiority in numbers, which, through their excellent staff work, and the fact that after four years of war every sector of the Front was " organised " for attack, they were able to launch against any point of our line which they chose without betraying their intentions. The battery positions already existed, and the guns could be moved in by night without attracting attention. Similarly, the infantry could be moved by night in trains to a point within a day's march of the front of attack without showing themselves to our aeroplanes. Provided the attack were launched at once there was no means of knowing that the German troops in the threatened sector had suddenly been heavily reinforced. The troops were kept under cover in the villages a mile or two from the front the day before the attack. During the night they made a final march to the trench line, and at dawn " went over." It was this method that enabled the enemy to achieve his successes in March, April, and May of 1918.

At the end of May the Chemin des Dames, which had been the scene of so many conflicts the year before, fell in an hour before an avalanche of German troops, whose progress could not be stopped until they had reached the Marne. During this time the German long-range guns were dropping shells in Paris, and every day the enemy's aim seemed nearer of accomplishment. He held the north bank of the Marne

at Château-Thierry. He was in Soissons, in Noyon, and Montdidier. He had drawn a line curving round Paris on the north and east, and it seemed that his next bound would bring him within effective artillery range of the suburbs.

In June began the German attack down the valley of the Matz, having for its objective Compiègne, which was gloriously stopped by Mangin within three days of its inception. Had the German High Command been wise they would have already realised that they had spent their shot, and that there was no longer a possibility of a German victory and a German peace.

From Compiègne to Château-Thierry runs a belt of thick forest—a stronger obstacle in the invaders' road to Paris than any conceivable fortress wall. In modern warfare such a barrier is impassable, because in modern warfare no army can move which cannot see its way before it. In a forest every tree may shelter a machine-gun. In a forest a tank or a division of infantry are safe from aeroplane observation. While the Germans were wasting their strength in Flanders, on the Aisne, and on the Marne, Foch was gathering his reserves under the trees of the forest of Villers-Cotteret. On July 15 the Germans crossed the Marne and attacked in Champagne. Marshal Foch knew perfectly well where the attack would be made. The Germans had tried every possible gap in the allied armour, and their plan of breaking into the heart of France, taking Châlons, and then swinging round on Paris, was perfectly well realised by the Anglo-French staff.

The attack in Champagne was stopped dead by Gouraud's army. On the Marne the enemy were checked within forty-eight hours by Berthelot's army. On July 18 Mangin launched the attack, drove in the pocket the Germans had estab-

lished between the Marne and the Aisne, and the end of the war was certain. On August 8 the French and British armies, under General Debeney and General Byng, broke in the German line on the Avre as if it had been tissue paper, and the advance began that led us through the Hindenburg Line over the Aisne, the Oise, and the Sambre to the Front our armies held within a few marches of the Meuse on the day the German emissaries arrived to beg for an armistice from Foch.

During all these months Paris had lived in a heat of excitement, tempered to sternest resolution. At the end of January began the almost nightly visits of German aeroplanes, and on the day the Germans launched their attack on General Gough's front big Bertha's shells began to fall in the city. Paris was already used to the sight of the principal statesmen and military chiefs of the allied countries motoring through her streets. The Supreme War Council had been for many months in existence, and was housed at the Trianon Palace Hotel, in which a year later the German delegates were first convoked to receive the terms of peace. In the days that followed the March attack of 1918 Paris grew more and more used to the visits of Mr. Lloyd George, Sir Douglas Haig, and the chiefs of the American Army. They were deliberating the great issue of the moment, that of the unity of the supreme command. Once it was decided Paris saw very little of the generals for many months. Foch hid himself in an old country house in the woods thirty miles east of Paris, Sir Douglas Haig returned to command his armies, General Pershing went back to his Headquarters to direct the transport of the American divisions to the Front, and Paris, left in complete darkness, cheerfully xepectant that another day's fighting would bring the German guns within range of her gates, confidently awaited the end.

but little difference to the Tiger, who immediately afterwards produced his journal under the title of *L'Homme Enchaîné*. In his paper Clemenceau week after week, day after day, preached the value of the martial qualities of will power.

"The Will to Victory," "Death or Victory," "Vouloir" are some of the titles of his leading articles which immediately spring to the mind. Each one of them was a clarion call to a people rapidly becoming accustomed to the staleness of trench warfare and too easily influenced by the insidious gases of German propaganda. When the Briand Ministry outlived its welcome both in the country and in the Chamber, it was allowed to live on for many a week because no one in the country or in the Chamber saw any alternative Ministry. At last Ribot was installed in the place of the Charmer and finally Ribot departed from the seat of power, the victim, as had been Briand before him, of the inability of the Allies to achieve victory. When Ribot left the chances of victory were not very hopeful, and all those politicians who even before the war had been in favour of a *rapprochement* with Germany were working at their hardest to link up in some way or other with her with a view to the negotiation of peace.

Ribot was not of their camp, trimmer though he may have been all through his political life, and it was left to Paul Prudent Painlevé to replace him at the Presidency of the Council.

It may be doubted whether since Boulanger a man has had more devoted and more blind political friends than M. Painlevé. As a Prime Minister he was an abject failure. He had already shown his lack of merit at the War Office, but as Premier he was almost pathetically inadequate. He had neither presence nor knowledge. Neither wit nor eloquence

was his. He could neither lead the Chamber nor realise where it was going so that he might follow in time. Both Painlevé and Ribot were the last efforts of Parliament to prevent the arrival in power of the man whom they had most reason to dread from a parliamentary point of view, namely, Clemenceau, who at every moment of his career has been ruthless in the exposition of scandals and has at no time pandered to the great vice of the Third Republic, political *camaraderie.*

It was the great treason scandals of France which gradually placed behind Clemenceau a strength of public opinion which Parliament itself could not resist.

During the 1917 offensive in the Champagne, when M. Painlevé was in charge and M. Malvy was Minister of the Interior, all sorts of dark stories were told as to the behaviour of the French troops engaged in the operations, which came to an unfortunate end. Some of the stories were true; most of them were grossly exaggerated. Certain it is that some one blundered; certain it is that there were mutinies upon a very alarming scale among the French troops in the Champagne sector; certain it is that a good number of the unhappy mutineers were shot after sentence by court-martial; and equally certain is it that they had been the victims of a propaganda directed by friends and acquaintances of the Minister of the Interior, and published for the greater part in a treasonable evening newspaper called *Le Bonnet Rouge,* which at the very moment of this crime was in receipt of Secret Service money placed at the disposal of the Ministry of the Interior for the Defence of the Country.

For many months Léon Daudet, a sort of Royalist Horatio Bottomley, had fulminated against every

imaginable kind of person on the ground that they were German agents or spies. By his shouting Wolf! too long people had ceased to take him seriously. There were, however, a number of very serious facts and events which confirmed Léon Daudet's accusations against M. Malvy. There was also the general suspicion of the activities of M. Caillaux, at one time one of the most powerful men in French political life, leader of the Radical-Socialist party, the centre of the Chamber, and the only Finance Minister France has ever possessed.

He was, not without reason, on account of his record during the Moroccan negotiations with Germany in 1911, suspected of a desire to act the part of the premature peace-maker, and his own journey to Rome and the company he frequented when in the Eternal City, no less than the gang of adventurers who surrounded him in Paris, all gave colour to the popular feeling that Caillaux was the centre of an attempt to make a premature peace.

Malvy had been his representative in the Ministries of the *Union Sacrée*. Bolo was known to be on terms of some intimacy with him. He was, in fact, a centre round which gathered all the defeatist talk of France.

Clemenceau, supported by steadily increasing popular feeling, began for the first time in the summer of 1917 "direct action." He launched a frontal attack upon Malvy, the Minister of the Interior, whom he accused of having been the protector of notorious German sympathisers in France, and who, he revealed, had failed at the outset of war to arrest the dangerous international Anarchists who figured on the lists of the political police as persons to be arrested in the event of war. Malvy made a defence which was fatal to his cause. He argued that it was only by soft speech and suave dealing that the *Union*

Sacrée had been made possible. Almeyreda, who afterwards committed suicide in gaol in mysterious circumstances, and who was editor of the infamous *Bonnet Rouge*, had acted as go-between in the negotiations undertaken by the Minister of the Interior which were to ensure the good behaviour of the Anarchists, and other elements of disorder in France during the period of mobilisation. Clemenceau showed that, in spite of this disgracefully weak bargain, already in 1914 this riff-raff of politics and journalism had already begun its work of national *sabotage*, and he showed beyond any reasonable doubt that the culminating result of their activities had been the mutinies at the Champagne front in 1917.

The Ministry got a small majority, but it was clear that not only were the days of Malvy numbered as Minister, but that the Government itself could not last very long.

Malvy's resignation helped them to stay on for a few more days. Then came the downfall, and finally Clemenceau was borne on a wave of popular decision into power.

His intervention in the Senate had already led to the arrest of more than one of the minor fry. When he came into power in November of 1917 his first acts were to deal out to the waiting criminals the rapid justice of martial law, and to proceed to the arrest of Malvy and of Caillaux himself. Pride's Purge was nothing to it. By the end of the year the Chamber had authorised the prosecution of M. Caillaux, a former Prime Minister; by January 21 the preliminaries of the trial of M. Malvy had been started in Parliament, and on February 4 began the trial of Bolo, one of the most amazing traitors in history. By then the prison of the *Santé* was becoming full. There

were some score of gentlemen more or less connected with the Malvy case, the Caillaux case, the *Bonnet Rouge* case, the Bolo case, the Humbert case, the Loustalot-Comby affair, the Turmel business, awaiting the attention of the rather terrifying officers who replace in military justice the not-too-benign Juge d'instruction of peace law-giving.

The case against Bolo was clear beyond all argument, but it rather wanted proving. This it got, thanks to the almost satanic and methodical cleverness of Lieutenant Mornet, the prosecutor for the Republic. I sat through most of the proceedings of the Bolo case, and I cannot give a better picture of its chief figure than that I wrote at the time.

"He is slim, as befits the 'Compleat Hairdresser.' He has plenty of hair, an ironic eye, a full lip, and fine moustaches; his voice is a light tenor, like water falling into a metal vessel already nearly full; his fingers are long and nervous, and might have been a gentleman's. And, with all these advantages, our Bolo cannot mention Colombian emeralds, Serbian mines, or millions by the dozen, without giving a distinct impression that he is really recommending Bolo Water as good for dandruff, or offering a friction of lavender water as excellent for the hygiene of the scalp. He is the predestined hairdresser, and might, if fate had been good to him, have won medals at annual congresses. As it is, he is an adept at conveying to the Court the feeling that it is being shampooed without getting any cleaner; all the sensations are there, even including what Mr. E. V. Lucas calls 'the squirmy change from hot to cold.'

"An old friend of his youth has stated that there is nothing in him, 'nothing in his head, nothing in his heart, nothing in him anywhere.' This is less than the truth; there is a dangerous quality in him, for

he can make friends, and can keep them, and can wrong them and yet beckon them back. He is as plausible a man as ever juggled with adventures such as are found, not on the open road and under the bright eyes of danger, but in the lounges of cosmopolitan hotels and the apartments of the mistresses of half-royalties. He can answer anybody, explain anything; only once in the course of this long week has he hung his head, averted his eyes, tried to speak, and failed. Before the sightless eyes of Madame Panon the sleek, slim little man shrank and wrinkled and wavered like something seen through a heat haze. No wonder! Why, even behind her back the cocksure young barristers who think the President and the prosecuting counsels ought to have asked their advice as to the conduct of the trial, forbore for many moments to exchange the voluble and sibilant whispers which remind the half-suffocated auditors at the back of the court that somewhere cool seas are whispering on pebbly shores.

"There are moments when it is very difficult to remember that this man's life is at stake; moments when the indignant public finds the entertainment dull, and one reflects that the late Sir Herbert Tree would never have let inaudible witnesses talk finance with their back to the audience. There are other moments when obviously the stage-management and the librettists have risen to their utmost heights. But there are few instants when one remembers that the smooth hair, the long moustaches, the plausible light voice, and the admirably tailored shoulders of the little man in the box are all in danger of extinction. Even the change in his appearance reminds one of the clever make-up of a good actor. His eyes sink daily farther into his head; his original congestion of blood in the cheeks has changed to an

unbecoming pallor; his gestures are increasingly nervous, and it is obvious that at times his temper is worn very thin indeed. For the first sitting he tried to bullyrag his judges; for the second he tried to hypnotise them; but for four subsequent days after that he has merely been a bundle of exacerbated nerves, which he holds in control with ever-growing difficulty. One can well understand this, even if he is innocent; perhaps better if he is innocent than if he is guilty, for a man guilty of the crimes of which Bolo is accused must many a time have dreamed of halters and seen visions of the cold walls of Vincennes at dawn.

"The trial has been disconcerting for the main accused; the evidence of the expert as to his financial position in 1914 was alone enough to raise the gravest alarm in the minds of Bolo's friends. His contention that he keeps no books or papers on principle was badly damaged by the assertion of a sweet-voiced lady who said that he had always been very nice to her—and wanted four signatures to two rigid documents before he would lend her eight hundred pounds! The man may be a dirty villain, but the witnesses who admit that they have been friendly with him cannot really like the ironic grin with which he waits for them to say that he is the scoundrel they have been describing—a kind of 'Well, Judas?' expression which several of them have not chosen to meet, and which increases with each profession they make of disinterestedness.

"The result, so far, we cannot be quite certain of. In the meanwhile we are watching the personalities of this trial. But for their sex, the military judges could best be described as seven Norns too bored to weave. They sit impassively in their large armchairs, overhung by the abundant persons of a large

crowd of people sufficiently legal to get into the back of the enclosure, and not sufficiently accredited to have places of their own. They all appear bored and abstracted, and the two lieutenants and one non-commissioned officer among them seemed rather at a loss as to the etiquette demanded of them when a general gave evidence.

"Maître Albert Salles, Bolo's counsel, is a massive person, with baggy eyes and a metallic voice. He spoke very little throughout the first acts—I mean the first stages—of the trial; his principal effect is one of solid impassive satisfaction at the puerility of the evidence given against his client, especially when this is peculiarly damning. Heraud, the counsel of poor old Porchère, the silent, the dazed, the perhaps-hypocritical, the certainly pitiable, is young, alert, and anxious to be truculent if an opportunity offers.

"But what chance has anybody when the prosecuting counsel, Lieut. Mornet, is like nothing so much in the world as a cynical lion certain of its prey? He has hitherto been quite polite to all the opposing witnesses; nothing else was left to him, after his brutal treatment, amounting to accusation, of all his own witnesses. It will be bad luck for the ordinary sinner if M. Mornet is briefed for Heaven at the Last Assize. He does not even condescend to pull his ruddy beard, to turn pale or red, when he is in a real rage; the duel between him and M. Charles Humbert was the duel between cold steel and molten lead. Molten lead burned more, but, as cold steel remarked, 'We will discuss these things at a more useful time, M. Charles Humbert.' When one remembers that M. Humbert was himself under suspicion of commerce with the enemy the bearing of this remark becomes clearer. M. Humbert was quieted by it very rapidly.

"The famous senator-journalist is a combination of the successful horse-dealer, the popular revivalist preacher, the Milesian bull, and, on this occasion, the angry child. He beat the witness-rail till it shook, he shouted, he stamped, he tore his hair, he waved his arms; he seemed threatened in turn by apoplexy, tears, homicidal mania, hysteria. He looked at everybody and raved of everything except Bolo, who played a very minor part in his testimony. At one moment we thought we were to witness personal violence, for he left the witness-stand with a bound in the direction of Mornet, who himself got up and leaned over his desk as far as he could, his eyes narrowing with rage—the only sign of temper he deigns to give. 'Arrest me and let me have some peace!' shouted Humbert. 'I've been dragged in the mud for four months. Arrest me; then at least I shall have an advocate to help me!' And it was obvious that either a burst of angry tears was not far off, or that he wished us to think that it wasn't.

"For the main impression one has received from the first week of the trial is that everybody is probably playing a carefully rehearsed part. They may be the kind of persons they appear to be, but the evidence makes it seem improbable. Is things what they seem, or are nightmares about? The misquotation is irresistible. The Bolo case is a pretty bad nightmare, and the worst of it is that we know it is the first, and probably the least distressing, of a series.

"The second week of the Bolo trial had less dramatic interest than the first, because every one was practically certain of the issue; Bolo himself kept up as good bluff as he could, but his smile was fitful, and had the appearance of being taken out of his pocket and put on when he thought people would be looking

at him. Caillaux's appearance as witness had been so dramatic in essence that expectations for the following week were proportionately small. What he said, it is true, was without interest; the time has passed when one can be passionately moved by professions of loyalty from M. Caillaux. But the way he said it! The harsh, metallic voice, with its queer breaks into falsetto, the nervous hands, the quick movements, were all changed. Instead of an energy vital and full of motive power, an energy commanding and redoubtable, Caillaux seemed at the Bolo trial a tired, done man. His hands hung limply over the rail of the witness-stand; his head took one tired attitude after another on his drooping shoulders; when Héraud spoke to him in the truculent manner of the young advocate who wishes to impress the world with his smartness, it was almost with a sigh of fatigue that the great Joseph turned to listen to him.

"Monseigneur Bolo, the brother of the hairdresser, was certain of his effect. The popular preacher turning up to testify to the good qualities of the black-sheep brother 'Hearken, my brethren!' he cried, or words to that effect. 'I have told you every week that you are miserable sinners, and now I change the note and say that I am one myself! The light-hearted sins of my brother's youth I could not forgive; I was wrong. Now he is an upright citizen, and has reformed himself without me, and I can know him again; and when he sent for me to the Grand Hotel he cast himself sobbing into my arms. And there you are; isn't that proof enough? If you want any more, here it is: I didn't see him for thirty years, which was my dreadful fault; but I know he had money in Antwerp in 1914. I just know it. Half the United States and all Germany left off the war to concoct a plan

against my poor brother that I had refused to know myself.'

"Presumably a popular French preacher never gets laughed at in church, and that was why he was so indignant at being laughed at in court. Anyway, he did his best for the scapegrace brother he had not had the courage to keep up with during the turbulent years of 'youthful faults.' We have it on his own word that he did not understand what 'playing for effect' might be. As the President remarked, 'You have just seen what it is.'

"The rest of the witnesses were more or less uninteresting, although M. Jacques Dhur was worthy of attention. He confined himself so completely to trying to shoot Charles Humbert at Vincennes that even Colonel Voyer, the most lenient and gentle president who ever directed a court-martial, found it necessary to remind him that the little gentleman in the dock was not the large and perspiring senator, and that he had really better mention Bolo before making his wished-for exit. So he did, and went.

"Mornet's speech for the prosecution was a great disappointment to all the *matinée* maniacs who thronged the court, and took up the place intended for hard-working journalists who have no time for morbid interest in living men already dead. He confined himself for four hours and fifty minutes, more or less, to a clear exposition of the evidence against the accused. He knew he was addressing, not the stalls and pit, not even the professionals invited to the star show, but seven quiet, cold, straightforward soldiers. If what convinced them did not titillate the public, so much the better. At the very end he did throw a sop to the panting crowd in the pit. He talked of France, and he mentioned his heart, which none of those who had watched him

treating the earlier witnesses had known him to be burdened with. He said that he had often asked for heads on chargers, and never without a lively emotion; but that he asked for Bolo's with all his heart and all his soul. Well, he has got it, and God help the next dirty little villain whose head M. Mornet thinks it due to France to ask for!

"When the verdict was pronounced it was to a breathless audience which drew a long, booming hollow sigh at the end of each count; thirty seconds later there came filtering through to the stifling hall the distant little shouts of an angry crowd: 'À Mort! À Mort! Vive la France!' Into a small room next the court those shouts penetrated, and told the wretched little hairdresser where his shoddy adventures were to end. No wonder he heard his sentence calmly when it was read to him later in the cleared court; a man who had lived to hear those muffled distant shouts could tell us what dying feels like.

"Who next? Which next? What will the crowd shout if Caillaux is sentenced to death? What will they not shout if he is acquitted? And between the hero of the first act and the harlequin of the end how many more have we not to wade with through the mud? Duval, Margulies, Malvy, Humbert, Caillaux, Comby, Hanau, and who else? These names are but a few. I cannot remember who is actually arrested and who has asked to be, and who has asked not to be. I cannot remember if Caillaux incited Hanau to strangle Humbert with the bootlace of Margulies unless he wrote a cheque for Duval to cash at the expense of Comby by means of Hanau, or, if he did not do this, what he did do.

"We have plenty more of these detective-spy dramas to come. From the point of view of psychology there is no denying their extreme interest, but from the

point of view of national interest, and still more from the standpoint of one's belief in human nature, they are, in school-boy parlance, 'pretty beastly.'

"By the arrest of M. Charles Humbert at his beautiful country château we are assured of yet another chapter in the unedifying, but certainly engrossing, spectacle which opened with the Bolo story. Humbert shouted at Mornet during the Bolo trial: 'Why don't you arrest me, and be done with it?' and Mornet seems to have thought the idea a good one, or, at any rate, have seen no reason why Humbert shouldn't have his way. So the 'Health' Prison is enriched by one more tenant accused of being of the same colour as the other occupants of its seventh and eleventh divisions. Like the rest of them, he gets his meals from a restaurant opposite the prison gates, which has had the ironic humour to call itself 'Restaurant of the Very Good Health!' It recalls that other café, opposite the Morgue, which says with equal humour:

> "'The fare here may not be good, or it may—
> But you're better here than over the way!'"

Bolo was, of course, nothing but a type of cosmopolitan adventurer with which Paris is unfortunately too familiar. His end at Vincennes in the early dawn where so many had preceded him and where so many were to follow was not really tragedy. He had no distance to drop. A man who has spent the greater part of his life in unsavoury adventures with more or less savoury women, who has dabbled about in international finance with Pashas whose functions at Court had better not be defined, cannot really be surprised at the fate which overcame him. Nor can any one else. Such an end was almost inevitable.

But the case of M. Malvy was an entirely different matter. As a young politician this man, who reminds all who behold him, by the singularly unhealthy tone of his complexion, of the seagreen incorruptible, managed to be instrumental in upsetting a Ministry and reaped the reward in the shape of an Undersecretaryship. By his own talents no less than by the influence of his patron Caillaux he subsequently transformed this into the Portfolio of the Interior. It is almost impossible to explain to those unacquainted with French politics how important is this post. The Minister of the Interior is our Home Secretary, Chief Whip, President of the Local Government Board, President of the Board of Works, Chief Commissioner of Police all rolled into one, and in addition to all these attributes he has in his hands at the time of dissolution the power to make the elections take practically what direction he desires.

The Minister of the Interior also has very wide powers of police, and exerts direct control over the operations of the Sûreté Générale among whose duties is that of the surveillance of spies and suspects.

In the course of the Bolo trial (all these trials were interconnected and provided evidence concerning other cases) it became quite clear that throughout the war there had not only been friction and jealousy of the most unpardonable nature between the different espionage and counter-espionage departments of the Ministry of War and the Ministry of the Interior, but that by culpable negligence enemy agents had been enabled to carry on their propaganda, not only unhindered by the police, but actually with the support and active help of the Ministry of the Interior. That this had indeed been the state of affairs had been shouted from the house-tops in unmistakable tones by the irrepressible Léon Daudet, and his accusations had

finally begun to make their effect felt in the country. There was a suspicion that treason was at work long before Clemenceau made his attack upon the Government through Malvy in the summer of 1917, and it is a bad thing to let the French begin to imagine that they are being *trahis*.

When Painlevé came in as the final stop-gap, it was pretty clear that he could not last, and I find that the impression made upon me at the time was fairly accurate, since I wrote in March of that year, at the time when Ribot had succeeded Briand:

"Throughout the crisis, however, there is one young man who has bobbed up into great prominence, and that is Paul Painlevé, who has taken the place of that fiery warrior, Lyautey, at the Ministry of War. Superficially there would seem to be but one difference between Painlevé and Winston Churchill. Painlevé does know something. He is renowned as a mathematician. A mysterious rumour which paved the way for his political exaltation declared that he also understood modern warfare. It looks rather as though Sir Douglas Haig, General Nivelle, and General Fayolle have also been dabbling in this abstruse science."

Painlevé was hoisted into power by men more clever than himself who hoped to be able to use him, and who in any case hoped to make him the saviour of Caillaux and Malvy from the wrath to come in the shape of Clemenceau. The campaign in his favour was carried on in the most astonishingly open manner. At one time there were two cafés—one in which the portfolios of the Painlevé Cabinet were allotted and reshuffled day by day, weeks before the crisis arose which brought him for a brief spell to power, and the other in which agents and friends of the existing Ribot Ministry fought by various methods for the

support of deputies and journalists. The semi-political salons of the Avenue du Bois de Boulogne, and some of the Faubourg, were made for weeks to ring with the praises of the somewhat smug and self-satisfied Paul Prudent Painlevé.

Finally he was safely intrigued into the post of Prime Minister by politicians who appeared utterly to have overlooked the fact that there was a public opinion which had followed Painlevé's record at the War Office, including as it did the failure of the offensive in the Champagne, the grave mutinies on the Front, and the possibility of military revolt in Paris itself, with more than apprehension.

The new Prime Minister showed that he was completely unable to impose himself upon the Chamber. His eloquence was notable by its absence, and the only thing more noticeably lacking in his speech was ideas. He showed conclusively that, while a man may be a most excellent Professor of Mathematics, he may make a wretchedly bad Premier.

He had, it is true, an almost impossible task to accomplish. Already then, under the pressure of opinion, the smaller conspirators of treason were either under lock and key or were having their acts investigated. But a day or two after he took over power the trickle of scandals began to flow with disconcerting volume. In the course of a week or so the French learned with satisfaction that a number of highly placed, and extremely well-protected, individuals had been arrested on charges varying from treason to trading with the enemy. The situation can perhaps best be explained if we give to the various prisoners their equivalents in English life.

We had, first of all, the Home Secretary (M. Malvy) openly accused in the House of Commons of being an enemy agent. Then we had the proprietor of the

French *Daily Telegraph* (*Le Journal*) accused of similar treason. Involved, and still outside the picture, was the former Prime Minister of France, and closely connected with it four or five other deputies, Permanent Under-Secretaries in more than one Ministry, a Judge of the High Court, more than one actress, and a tribe of black-mailing journalists.

All these wretched people were in some way or other connected with the Ministry of the Interior. Some played poker with the Minister, some received secret service money from his hands. With nearly all of them had Malvy some relations either officially or personally. The nature of the task Painlevé assumed when he accepted to be "boosted" into power may be gathered by the fact that he conceived it as his first duty to undertake the defence of Malvy and to cover with his mantle all the creatures which had gathered around him.

It was in October 1917 that the inevitable storm burst.

By then Bolo was already under arrest, the *Journal* affair was under investigation. Almeyreda, the editor of the *Bonnet Rouge*, had been arrested, German money having been traced to his possession, and died in mysterious circumstances, in which boot-laces played an all-important part, in the gaol infirmary; Deputy Turmel had been gathered to the Santé Prison; Duval, Landau, Goldsky, Marion were there awaiting the arrival of many persons more distinguished than themselves. Any effort to save Malvy from the crimes of his maladministration was already foredoomed to failure.

It was Léon Daudet, the royalist spy-hunter, who made even the effort so to do an impossibility.

The French Chamber has seen many excited sittings in the course of its war history, but perhaps none was more turbulent, more charged with human and

political passion, and more pregnant with importance for France, and indeed for the whole course of the war, than that of October 4, when, yielding to the insistence of M. Malvy, who had but a few days before resigned from the Ministry of the Interior, M. Painlevé read a letter, communication of which he had himself that morning received from the President of the French Republic. In that letter, read out to a deeply interested House, Léon Daudet charged Malvy with the abominable crime of treason, practised in the most direct and atrocious manner.

The effect of this bombshell upon a crowded House can be imagined. An *affaire* of the greatest magnitude had become certain, and an *affaire* has always been dear to the heart of the French politician. On the ordinary outside public the impression made was one of uneasy disgust, and an increase in the growing popularity of Clemenceau. Some notes made at the time will perhaps best translate public feeling:

"Nobody enjoyed the long and painful scene in the Chamber, M. Malvy least of all, when he stood at the tribune for over three hours, patiently waiting while Ministers past and present intervened with long and chatty accounts of incidents already known to the House, getting on with his explanations as best he could when he was allowed to, turning paler and paler, mopping his brow, and finally fainting when he got back to his seat. We have heard so much about the cheque business, the Carnet D, the mobilisation, that the public is sick of them all. It wants M. Turmel and Bolo and the other people who have *affaires* examined quickly and dealt with justly, and the spectacle of a house of representatives shouting, interrupting, wrangling, bandying words—'If there was a fault it was as much yours as mine,' said Malvy to Viviani, as part of his speech—can only disgust still

further the man in the street. M. Painlevé reproached the world in general once again with taking a disproportionate interest in these scandals, an interest which, he said, obscured the heroism at the Front. He forgets that we are all sure of heroism at the Front, can rely on it; while all these dangerous matters here are like poisonous plants, that must be cleared away. It would be poor tribute to the men at the Front if those behind allowed them to be stabbed in the back; and it has been shown—was shown very admirably in this same debate—that public departments do not always act with as much vigour as they might unless spurred thereto by public opinion.

"The responsibility for last Thursday's scene does not rest on any one man, but M. Léon Daudet's letter to the President, roundly calling Malvy a traitor, undoubtedly caused a great deal of the inflamed feeling. It is hard to defend yourself when you are constantly interrupted, both by friends and enemies, and Malvy will have to make a better effort before the evidence of the letter is forgotten. He said that the whole affair was an attempt by the Right to attack the Republic. Everybody accused everybody else of every sort of desperate behaviour, and the people who were not accusing shouted at those who were. And they all played catch-as-catch-can till the gunpowder ran out at the heels of their boots.

"Painlevé's remarks did not do much to clear up public opinion on that curious affair. He said that Ministers were bound to hear calumnies quietly, and was immediately shouted at: 'That's in peace time.' Surely even a Prime Minister can see the difference between the careless libels of peace, and saying a man is a deliberate traitor who has in time of war sold his country and her soldiers in the trenches? It

would have been, of course, very reprehensible of M. Malvy to have shot M. Daudet, but it would at least have been an admirably firm preface to his reply; and people have been acquitted for crimes less obviously provoked than that. He would have been more popular to-day in France had he at least tried to hit or pummel or punch or kick his accuser, particularly as he has not the remedy open to him of which Lloyd George availed himself the other day. The law of libel is a dead letter in France. It practically amounts to this: that you can say what you like of a man for sixteen francs.

"In the meantime we are awaiting the fall of the present Government. It was expected last Friday, but too many people had seen the whiskers of a Tiger peeping forth. The country would like a tiger, even if he roared for but a little time, so long as he lashed his tail to proper effect; but the Chamber, which must dwell inside the same cage with him during his power, is but too well aware that most of it is edible, and would certainly get eaten. It was a mistake to let those whiskers be seen quite so soon.

"The distinguishing feature of our many *affaires* recently has been the 'you're another' attitude of every one concerned. M. Turmel turned upon his accusers by charging an official at the Chamber with theft; he cannot have known how popular a fashion he was inaugurating. M. Lenoir, being arrested, immediately brings charges of blackmail against M. Humbert. One of his mistresses, suspected of having been concerned with him in some of his nefarious transactions, takes the earliest opportunity, burning with indignation, of bringing an action against the gentleman to get back her furniture. M. Daudet accuses M. Malvy of high treason, and immediately the high authorities raid the offices of *L'Action*

Française. It is all anything but magnificent, and it certainly isn't war. All these counter-charges savour of a squabble in the nursery, but unfortunately there all likeness to so innocent a place ends. The public is getting very sick of it all, and the Americans even more so. It is a great pity that they come to save Europe and find us all wallowing up to the neck in these unsavoury affairs.

"*November.*—It was in vain, three weeks ago, that all parties drew back in alarm at a sudden glimpse of a Tiger's whiskers round the corner. No amount of hasty concessions and unexpected leniences towards the Government could stop the relentless stream of circumstances which were bound to put M. Painlevé out of office; and, once he was out of office it was evident that M. Clemenceau must be asked to form a Government. There was a two days' pause before this step was finally taken by the President, but in that interval nobody else appeared, and the inevitable had to be accepted. It is with somewhat malicious glee that the public, not composed of deputies and senators, looks forward to the merry game of General Post which is likely to take place. Clemenceau is very formidable as blind man. Let us hope that he will, at any rate, manage to catch both players when the post is going between Berne and Berlin, and Paris and Berne.

"Although the House gave a vote of confidence to the Government on its general war policy and upset it merely on the internal question of scandals, it cannot be denied by those who read Mr. Lloyd George's frank statement regarding the unification of the Fronts, that it provided a very good jumping-off place for those who wished to plunge into criticism of the Government. The debate on the general war policy, although it ended in a Government majority,

was packed with spoken and unspoken dissatisfactions, and the majority itself was a slender one of 58. Nobody was really surprised when the subsequent refusal of M. Painlevé to fix a day before the Allied Conference for the discussion in Parliament of the various scandals changed this majority into a minority of 93. It was obviously impossible that the Chamber could accept his view that, if the discussions took place before the Allied Conference, the Premier would not have the requisite authority to represent France at the Conference. His authority was severely undermined already by the very fact that the airing of these scandals in Parliament had been postponed, and apparently he himself thought it likely that if it did take place it would damage his position as the official representative of France among the nations. The whole business is thoroughly disquieting, and the ordinary member of the public looks hopefully to the chances of having a thorough sweeping and airing of our very dusty House of Politics under the rule, however brief, of M. Clemenceau.

"Meanwhile our many *affaires* daily sprout into new accusations of the accused against the accusers, and columns of the paper are taken up with letters from M. Caillaux to Clemenceau and Barrés; letters from M. Humbert to the Procureur Général; explanations from some people's mothers and other people's wives; shouts of dismay from other people's mistresses; and altogether there is such a mass of 'I didn'ts' and 'you're anothers' that the public is thoroughly tired of the whole lot."

Painlevé fell not so much through his inability to achieve victories in the field, as by his obvious reluctance to prevent defeatism in the country, or at least his refusal to see it. Clemenceau, after a period of desperate endeavour by many political clans to make

his ministry impossible, came into power serenely conscious that he had the country behind him as perhaps no man has in France since Napoleon at the height of his career. He was borne into power because the country felt that it wanted a cauterising iron passed over the boils and other excrescences which had gathered on it during the war. The country wanted Clemenceau because they wanted to break with the old bankrupt system of parliamentary compromise. They knew that in Clemenceau there were the makings of a dictator, and the French in the autumn of 1917 would have accepted any dictator who appeared to give some guarantee that the war would be prosecuted with vigour and success, and that at least the men in the trenches would be protected against the apparent treason of people in the rear in Press and in Parliament. Clemenceau was, if you like, a great national gamble. And it is to the honour of President Poincaré that at no time during the difficult period when Clemenceau was forming his Ministry did the President of the Republic, his old enemy, seek to put spokes in his wheels.

CHAPTER IX

THE NEW BROOM AND MALVYISM

M. CLEMENCEAU'S opening speech in Parliament carried away not only his supporters and the neutral party of the House, but even among the Socialists, who had decided to hold aloof in their disgust at having been excluded from the Cabinet, there were many who could not refrain from applauding some of the burning and stirring phrases. In particular, when he cried, "All for France, bleeding in her glory; all for the apotheosis of triumphant Right," even the ranks of Tusculum could not forbear to cheer. That sitting of Parliament may very well rank as history with the session of August 4th, 1914. After weeks of scandals, arrests, claims, and counter-claims, bickerings, and all the rest of the mud that clings round what Clemenceau calls "treason and semi-treason," his vigorous statement came like a clean, healthy, drying wind over a stagnant marsh. Hopes were high before he made his speech, but they bounded up much higher directly afterwards, and when the news of the Cambrai victory came the next day, one captured for a moment the light-hearted happiness in which, looking back, it seems we must have lived before the war.

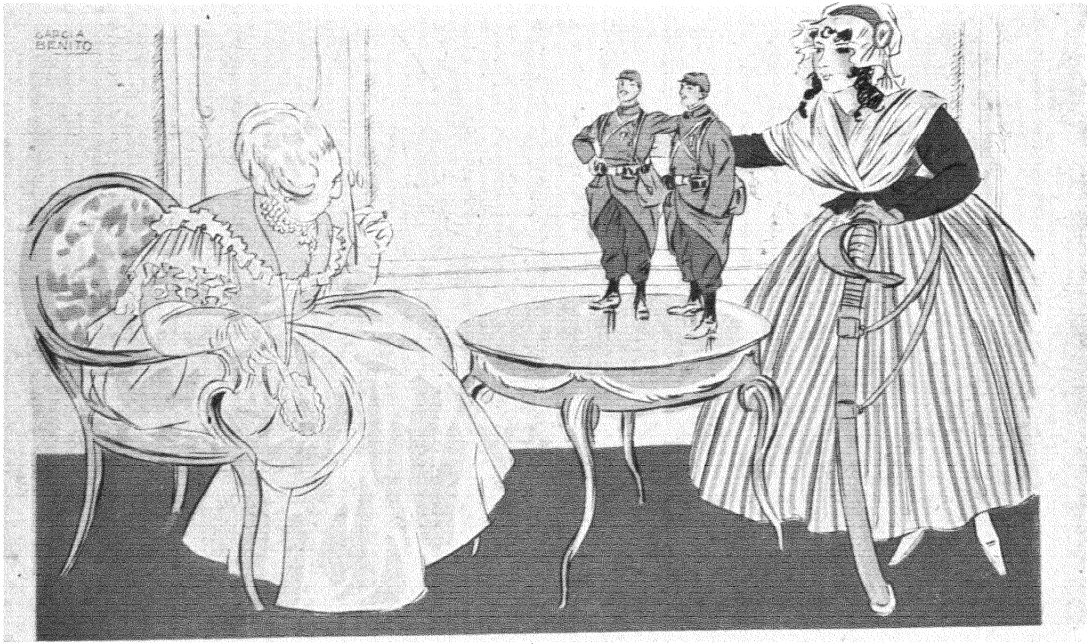
That particular military cause of satisfaction was not to last long, but Clemenceau did not let the grass grow under his feet in setting to work upon the speeding up of justice in France. So old a politician knew too well what would be the consequences to his own

Government were he to allow Caillaux, Malvy, Bolo, and the *Bonnet Rouge* to resume or continue their activities, to withhold his hand.

His first action was to turn over the Turmel case from civilian to military justice, and then he set about a very thorough weeding out of the police services. Any man suspected in any way of having been among those who aided Malvy in his policy was immediately removed from the service, or transferred to some branch of it where his political aspirations would be impossible of attainment. Then, for a time, there was a pause—a pause filled with cries and counter-cries of all the politicians and journalists concerned on one side or the other. The din these polemists kicked up threatened almost to silence the guns at the Front. The ceaseless daily wrangling in the press, at the Chamber, in letters to editors, in libel suits, led to a feeling of dangerous irritation which fell to calm as though by magic when Clemenceau boldly and simply grasped the biggest nettle in the field he had to weed—Caillaux.

Caillaux at the moment of writing still awaits his trial before the Senate, and it is therefore difficult to go in detail into the charges made against him.

"It is with a sigh of relief," I wrote at the time, "that we have settled down to the possibility of talking about Caillaux, instead of whispering about him. General Dubail's letter to the Government asking for power to prosecute Caillaux for 'conduct endangering the safety of the State' has caused a profound sensation. We all hoped that Clemenceau would have sufficient energy and courage to take action, but when that action came it was so much more pronounced and detailed than we had expected that we all immediately became much more Clemencite than we had been; with the exception of M. Caillaux's



L'UNION SACRÉE.

The Marquise: "Dear me, your boy and mine look just alike!"

Reproduced by kind permission of the artist, Garcia Benito.

friends, of whom he has a fair number, and they very staunch. He will need them all. It is already said that he will not keep them all. With French cynicism the day after the publication of Dubail's letter, the favourite topic of conversation was an analysis of these friends, with speculation as to which of them would *lâcher* him first, and which would stand by him to the end.

"This week has not produced any sensation comparable to last week's arrest of Caillaux and the altogether unseemly scene in the Chamber on Friday. The former came a fortnight earlier than even optimists had dared to hope for; the latter has made the French citizen so angry with the gentlemen who arranged it that it would be well for them to think twice before rehearsing any more public theatricals of the same kind.

"Why is it that the moment a man has been put into prison we become so passionately interested in what he eats and drinks, with other details down even to his laundry? As soon as M. Caillaux went to join the other gentlemen who are helping to contradict the name of the 'Santé' prison, one would have supposed that his crime had consisted in reading Wells and Baudelaire. The fact that he was shaving when arrested, and wiped the lather off with a towel ('of all unlikely articles,' evidently understood), really has less bearing on the charges against him than it has on the tactlessness of the authorities, who prefer 8 a.m. for making their arrests, and keep one particular motor-car for taking the arrested away in. There is a lack of delicacy about this which never escapes the arrested.

"The various trials are coming on with all the rapidity which an energetic man can infuse into a lymphatic system. It will not be Clemenceau's fault

if the law's delays are not considerably abbreviated. One is tempted to feel, when one reads the list of occupants of adjoining cells in the Santé, that the late lamented Guy Fawkes might find some useful work ready to his hand could he move amongst us again to-day."

By February Bolo had been condemned to death. He was shot on April 17, after a desperate series of attempts to keep him alive if only for another day or so. He appealed to every court to which he could appeal. They were all adamant. Then he apparently hoped that by making revelations he might purchase his liberty. He kept a hard-worked junior of the Public Prosecutor continually at it receiving worthless confessions and stories about spies for some few days. Copying Scheherazade, he "at this instant, perceiving it was day, broke off. 'What a wonderful story!' said Dinarzade. 'The conclusion,' answered Scheherazade, 'is still more surprising, as you would confess if the Sultan would suffer me to live another day, and in the morning permit me to continue the relation.' The Sultan determined to wait until to-morrow, intending to order her execution after she had finished her story. . . ." A note to my edition of the *Arabian Nights* here remarks: "In the original work Scheherazade continually breaks off to ask the Sultan to spare her life for another day that she may finish the story on which she is engaged, and he as regularly grants her request. These interruptions are omitted as interfering with the continued interest of the numerous stories told by the patriotic Scheherazade."

With the shooting of Bolo and the arrest of numbers of his accomplices and dupes, the country felt the satisfaction which alone can be given by a head in such circumstances. *Les Dieux avaient soif*, and

Bolo's wretched blood was the first to assuage that thirst.

His case was, however, but an approach to the real kernel of the matter which in those days led through Malvy, the once all-powerful Minister of the Interior, to the man who had been his political godfather, and Prime Minister of France, M. Joseph Caillaux.

Painlevé sought, when he came into power, to cover Malvy. The thing was impossible. Malvy was so hopelessly compromised that even the fact that he had been one of the chief Ministers in all the War Cabinets of France could not save him. His former colleagues, whose responsibility was all more or less engaged (it must be noted, however, that the theory of joint Cabinet responsibility as it used to be observed in England was unknown in France) all made more or less sincere efforts to save him from the inevitable end.

It came, fortunately perhaps for him, in the High Court of the Senate, after many delays due, partly to the efforts of his friends to save him, and partly to the reluctance—a well-justified reluctance—of French politicians to inaugurate a procession of politicians to the dock, if no farther.

Malvy was condemned to exile amidst general indifference. He was shown beyond any question to have been unworthy of his trust, and it was probably only political considerations which saved him from a more violent sentence. He now awaits in exile the reversal of his sentence, his crime not falling under those benefiting by the new amnesty law. France is a quick-forgetting country, but it is to be doubted whether even the short political memories of the French, and the amazing tolerance they have for those who "represent" them in Parliament, will allow Malvy

to play again an important part in the affairs of the State.

The condemnations of Malvy and of Bolo in themselves were sufficient to assure the public that treason had been stopped. But before both of those desirable events had happened, Malvy had been attacked steadily throughout the trial of the *Bonnet Rouge* gang.

That trial, like so many other of the treason trials which polluted the air of France during those summer months, was really nothing but a sifting-out of the evidence against Malvy, and perhaps to a lesser extent against Caillaux.

The *Bonnet Rouge* was a journal started before the war with a definite programme in European affairs which consisted in helping on a solid understanding between the French and the Germans. Such a policy is, or perhaps was, capable of defence. When, however, the war broke out the *Bonnet Rouge* assumed a very different rôle. Its editor then was a romantic-looking creature, the famous Almeyreda. He had the long hair, the raven locks, the liquid eye, and the soft olive complexion which the Italian cinema films have made familiar to the least travelled among us. He was, as befits a cinema hero, a very thorough blackguard. His real name was Vigo, as far as could be ascertained by the police, and it was only on attaining the ripe age of seventeen that he made his first official acquaintance with the police he was afterwards to direct. The occasion was painful for him. He was then serving as apprentice to a photographer in the South of France when, as the result of what the French rather charmingly call an "indelicacy" with his master's money, he spent a couple of months in prison. The result of his philosophical reflections in his cell was seen when, on his departure from gaol, he assumed the unstained name of Almeyreda and be-

came the avowed enemy of Society. He joined fortunes with the most militant wing of Anarchists he could find at the time in France (in happier times and climes he might have become a Lenin) and preached the most violently anti-militarist doctrines, which soon again, by their appeals to mutiny, brought him into gaol. Each fresh sojourn in the prisons of the Republic embittered his ardent revolutionary soul, and on his return to civil life he openly advocated the destruction of railway bridges likely to be of use to the army in the event of mobilisation, and declared roundly "that every citizen must be antipatriotic," and that it was "a matter of indifference" to him whether he were a German or a Frenchman. He founded the *Bonnet Rouge* in November 1913, and produced under that name a thoroughly scurrilous blackmailing sheet in which, not content with blackmailing persons, he endeavoured to blackmail the whole country.

Almost the day after the killing of Calmette in the offices of the *Figaro* by Madame Caillaux, the *Bonnet Rouge* was enabled to change from a weekly to a daily paper, and it began a campaign of great violence in favour of Madame Caillaux. There was, as appeared later, a very good reason for this vehemence: Caillaux had supplied the *Bonnet Rouge* with capital, and it was in the midst of a body-guard of "roughs" recruited by Almeyreda that Caillaux, during the trial, went down to the Palais de Justice. That the relations thus begun were continued after the war, if only through Malvy, is quite certain. Almeyreda was on terms of *tutoiement* with the Minister of the Interior and extracted from him a subsidy of six thousand francs a month drawn from the secret service money. When Almeyreda was arrested he turned every stone he could to find a saviour, and none was forthcoming. Once in

prison the wretched man, a drug-taker in an advanced class, fell seriously ill and was removed to the penal infirmary of Fresnes. There he was put into a separate cell, and, as his night-nurse, he was given a man serving a sentence for assault with violence. He was found dead in his cell one morning in circumstances which aroused considerable controversy. The official version was that he had committed suicide by hanging himself with his boot-laces.

The suicide or death of Almeyreda robbed the trial of the *Bonnet Rouge* gang of its chief figure. Almeyreda would have been an interesting psychological study in the dock. He would have drawn all Paris. He would have become a Super-Bolo, for he was clever, good-looking, in the somewhat cheap way which appeals to the sensation-hunters who throng the law courts in France. Nothing in his life, perhaps, more became him than his manner of quitting it. He went out dramatically, leaving behind him a mystery which probably will never be solved. He left behind him his accomplices. They were a dull lot, with perhaps the exception of Duval, who, over the signature of Monsieur Badin, distilled every day in the columns of the paper more defeatist poison than the whole of the rest of the German propaganda department produced in a year. His articles were not without literary grace. They were certainly full of cunning. And how Duval gloried in them!

Of the remaining prisoners there was really only one other who attracted any attention. He was Leymarie, a man who had risen to one of the highest posts in the French Civil Service, who was Chef de Cabinet to the Minister of the Interior, and wore in his buttonhole the red ribbon of the Legion of Honour—a rarer distinction even among Frenchmen than most English humour would lead one to suppose.

It is perhaps safer, in describing this trial again, to trust to impressions written after spending many hours in the stuffy court of the Palais de Justice, where sat the Third Court-martial of the district of Paris, and where more sentences to death have perhaps been given than in any other building of France during the war, than to long-distance memory.

"The *Bonnet Rouge* trial," I wrote, "is dull. It attracts meagre houses, and the actors lack distinction. The piece is long, there is a total lack of love-interest, and the *dénouement* is too obvious. It is billed for a ten-day run, and everybody who has seen the cast says, without exception, 'Shoot 'em at sight, and let's get on to something else' (which its name is Joseph). A sorrier crew of weasels and water-rats than the five prisoners one would have to go far to find. They gnaw their lips and tap with their fingers, and look round the sides of their eyes; they are green and blue, and other cheese colours; they have harsh voices, and talk a great deal too much. In fact, they look like a pack of seedy adventurers. Landau has some sort of distinction, because he has a mane of white hair, a thin black moustache like a Chinaman's, a face that looks blanched by nature and not by fear, and a pair of piercing dark eyes. He might be the political conspirator of a play done by a strolling troupe.

"Duval is the picture of the little tradesman; it is impossible to describe his appearance, because there is no salient feature to describe, save, perhaps, a pair of little round light eyes with immense whites, which he rolls and protrudes when he wishes to express astonished reproach. In repose his mouth droops like a willow, and he becomes a most lamentable figure of depressed fright.

"Marion is vaguely good-looking. When he puts

pince-nez on his eyes are enlarged and brightened, and so give a little character to his face. Goldsky is round-shouldered and rat-faced; he looks the kind of man to commit a crime because he was told to, and then, by way of proving his innocence, tell who told him to do it. Joucla looks like a naughty, mean, unwholesome, stupid child; he has this distinction, that his opening statement was meaner than those of the others, and gave them away worse.

"The two persons accused, but not in custody, are of a better type. Vaucasson, the printer of the *Bonnet Rouge*, is an agitated bourgeois afflicted by the impossibility of turning pale when frightened; the red in his round cheeks becomes fixed and isolated, and he mops his brow after Mornet has spoken in a way which must flatter that terrifying person.

"Leymarie does not look like a Frenchman at all. He is a big, blue-serge man, clean-shaven, with a big nose, dark hair discreetly curly, the Legion of Honour in his button-hole, and the general appearance of an English writer of successful revues. He is the only one of the lot that sits still and does not mind either the revelations of his friends or the comments of the redoubtable Mornet.

"The members of the court-martial sit and hear it all; the president occasionally says, 'Let us now return to the subject.' M. Mornet has studied and developed since the Bolo trial his very successful study of the waiting lion who enjoys the frisking of his prey.

"There have hitherto been no revelations; we all knew the accusations and could guess the explanations. The witnesses may liven things up a bit, but hitherto the show has not been able to rival the events on the Front in public interest. A few repartees are accorded the honours of café-repetition. Thus: 'If

you didn't go to Spain in connection with these documents, why did you go?' Marion: 'To be present at the opening of the San Sebastian racing season' (in 1916!). Or Joucla: 'Yes, I went to the German consulate in Barcelona; I went there as I would have gone over the top!' Or Marion: 'I have had no luck in my friends.' Mornet (without turning his head): 'Nobody in this business has had any luck in his friends.'

"The prisoners occasionally make a diversion by having a little row among themselves, contradicting each other, giving each other the lie direct, and even asking Mornet if such or such a statement is not ridiculous. Mornet follows the counsels of St. Paul, in part at least; he suffers these fools, but no gladness appears in his countenance. He has the air of finding them the sort of fools that ought not to be suffered, gladly or otherwise.

"The audience includes a large number of wounded soldiers, who must contrast the life of the trenches rather ironically with the life of the Palais de Justice. This building, however (let us not forget it), is within the line of Bertha. Will she risk hitting this dope-stricken crew of adventurers? Perhaps,—the day after she risks hitting the Santé.

"It becomes more and more obvious that our present trials and scandals are in the nature of incidents used by a skilful dramatist to produce dramatic suspense and develop the idiosyncrasies of his characters. Duval may be supposed to have felt like a principal personage, particularly when being condemned to death; but nobody else agreed with him, M. Mornet least of all. He asked for Duval's head as a man might ask for mustard, because he hopes there is beef coming—bully beef.

"A few remarks like that naturally tend to draw

away the interest from the Duval gang, who are, besides, a shabby crew of adventurers, not worthy of too many thoughts. Public interest in the Malvy and Caillaux trials will certainly be red-hot; but there is a whole crowd of others to come, which will only attract real attention if and when the name of M. Caillaux appears in them. 'We shall have to deal with this point,' said Mornet wearily, 'in the Lenoir-Desouches case'; and he sighed heavily and seemed to look down a vista of muddy trials. The whole summer will apparently be passed in thinking of treason, discussing treason, discovering treason. As soldiers rather bitterly say when they speak of the long assemblies and all the paraphernalia of the Palais: 'At the Front a soldier is shot and buried in twenty-four hours.'

"Mme. Caillaux is very loyal to her husband. Having shot one editor in his defence, she is now using missiles of paper upon another, in the form of a letter stating that Caillaux is not mixed up with the Turmel case. She insisted that the letter be published, and the editor in question, doubtless remembering what happened to Calmette, has published it, without comment. It is very unfortunate for M. Caillaux that, whenever there is a treason case in which he is not mentioned by the prosecution as having been mixed up with some of the parties, he is always mentioned by the defence as not having had that misfortune; thus his name inevitably appears, one way or the other. It recalls the adventure of the naughtiest boy in the school, who, when the examiner asked: 'Who signed Magna Charta?' sprang to his feet and cried: 'Please, sir, it wasn't me!'"

By the middle of May these miserable creatures knew their fate.

Duval the protesting, the Napoleonic, the wit, the

man who had ideas greater than any one else, was condemned to show his fortitude by being shot at Vincennes. Landau the blackmailer, Marion the born easy rogue, Goldsky the Bolshevist rat, and Joucla the stupid fool received appropriate sentences of imprisonment, or of hard labour.

The *Bonnet Rouge* was not the only journalistic venture in which Bolo had put strange money drawn from even stranger sources. We had throughout this period a series of scandals affecting the *Journal*, and many another less reputable paper. Senator Humbert was tried on the charge of having known that the money with which Bolo purchased his paper was tainted, to say the least of it. He was acquitted. Lenoir, the degenerate son of a very well known and influential Parisian, was condemned to death, and others in the trial were sentenced to different terms of imprisonment.

The *Journal* trial, like the Bolo trial, like the *Bonnet Rouge* trial, like the Hanau trial, like every other trial and scandal which filled Paris with its unsavoury details throughout that long summer, was in a way the overture to the great trial which at the moment of writing has not yet begun.

Caillaux, former Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, was arrested on January 14th, 1918, and still (September 1919) awaits his trial before the Senate. Since his arrest his affairs have occupied the attention of the Chamber on more than one occasion, and have given rise to passionate scenes. He writes every now and again to the Press through his lawyers protesting against the delays which have occurred in bringing him to justice. Those delays are, many of them, due to the antiquated and cumbrous machinery of French justice when it lays its hand upon a giver of the law. First of all, before a deputy can be arrested

the consent of the Chamber has to be obtained. This means that the Chamber, in cases of importance, appoints a committee chosen from its own members to examine the case in all its details. As such committees are appointed upon a political basis, there is naturally every opportunity for the friends and enemies of the man concerned to take advantage of the delays of procedure.

These have been many in the Caillaux case. There has also been the difficulty of collecting evidence so widely scattered as that which concerns Caillaux. It has had to be sought for in France, in Italy, in North and in South America. Once the Chamber had decided that there was a case to be answered, once the accused had been arrested, there remained the question as to the tribunal before which he would be brought. For a time the military authorities had charge of the case. Now it lies in the hands of the Senate. Since M. Caillaux still awaits trial it would be obviously unfair to comment upon his actions or to attempt to forecast the future. All that can be said is that the delay in bringing him to trial—a delay in which he himself bears the greater part of responsibility—has been far from prejudicial to his chances. Had he been tried in the dark days of July, instead of in the comparatively rosy days of victory, his fate might well have been different. As it is he is still in custody in a nursing-home. He has left it at intervals, and has come again into the court where, on the eve of the outbreak of war, he testified in favour of his wife, who was on her trial for the murder of Calmette. But, so far, his appearances in the third court-martial of Paris have been in the quality of witness in the trials of others for treason. He awaits his trial.

His arrest was an absolute necessity from a national

point of view, and an extremely expedient action from the point of view of politics. The new Broom had to sweep clean. It was useless for Clemenceau to lay all the minor characters by the heels and leave untouched the man who, rightly or wrongly, was suspected by the majority of Frenchmen of being the heart and soul of the Defeatist movement. The arrest of Caillaux deprived the many dissatisfied potential French Bolshevists of their possible leader, and gave to Clemenceau and to the army peace in which to drive home the wedge of victory.

It would be tragic were this long exposition of the many scandals which flowed through the Palais de Justice to give to the English reader the idea that France was like this. France translated her spirit at Verdun and on countless other battle-fields. These creatures of the courts-martial were but the dregs. They knew nothing of morality. They went, I have no doubt, to the execution stake convinced of the injustice of their sentence, for I do not believe that there was one among them who understood the meaning of the word "patriotism," and the word "treason" to all of them meant nothing at all. They are gone, but some of their work lives after them.

CHAPTER X

SOME WAR PARISIANS

THIS book is but modest in its pretensions. It does not attempt to provide the historian of the future even with the small beer of history which is gossip. It would, however, be incomplete, even as the vaguest sketch of life in Paris during the war, if it did not include some account of the men who have been constantly in our eye since 1914.

The late Lord Bertie, the British Ambassador during the greater time of stress and trouble, had not waited until the war to make himself talked of in Paris. He was very thoroughly detested by many, admired by many also who knew his special characteristics, and he wrung from yet a third class an almost unwilling tribute to his character. In July of 1917 I noted: "The rumour spreads that 'The Bull' is about to leave the Embassy. In fact, during the war Paris has become accustomed to two things, if to nothing else: first the question, 'What is Lord Esher doing in Paris?' and secondly, the rumour that 'The Bull' is about to leave the Embassy. In the dread day when all secrets shall be given up, the first question will certainly be answered; but the length of Lord Bertie's Foreign Office service and the robustness of his health rather suggest that, when that dread day comes, he will leave the Faubourg St. Honoré to take his place as doyen at the head of the Corps Diplomatique, and talk tactfully to St. Peter about the

crowing of cocks while awaiting audience. In his exalted sphere, and in his own special way, His Excellency is quite a diplomatic edition of Mr. Arnold Bennett's 'Card.' 'There are 11,900 subjects of elegant conversation,' saith an Arab proverb; 'nevertheless, there are some people who cannot meet a cripple without talking about feet.' His Excellency takes rather a special joy in talking about 'feet,' but the bluff, straightforward way in which he does it has quite endeared him to the French, who see the truth in him, and are glad, in a shifty world of politicians, to have to deal with a loyal and candid friend of France. Fools return the compliment to those who cannot suffer them.

"Of Lord Bertie's friends it is needless to speak; but it is significant of his impressive personality that almost as many of his enemies will regret his departure as will rejoice at it. Those who have no sense of humour have always disliked the Ambassador; nothing renders a man more suspect to the simple and earnest mind than an idea that he can not only divine jokes underground without a hazel wand, but can even see them when they are straight in front of his eyes. This alone renders a man dangerous. A habit of telling the truth whenever he happens to feel like it is almost more serious, if that were possible. French public men, when they wish to characterise a statement as an extremely blunt, and probably not too welcome, truth, call it 'un vrai Bertie,' and there is no reason to suppose that the man who gave occasion for such a phrase should regret being its godfather.

"Lord Bertie is reproached with not having mingled in sufficiently varied social circles in Paris. This reproach is very general among the British colony, and it must be admitted that, from the social point of view, the Ambassador has never shown the slightest

symptoms of finding the colony amusing. He has entertained it on the King's birthday, and the like, with suitable magnificence and gravity, and when necessary has done his best for its interests; but, after all, a man with a brilliant cosmopolitan career behind him and living in the most brilliant cosmopolitan society in the world, is likely to find his friends in that society rather than among the commercial, professional, or voluntary idle exiles which compose the foreign colony of any one country.

"Among the French there is no doubt that Lord Bertie has achieved a personal and diplomatic success. His last *mot* runs round Paris like wildfire; a Bertie anecdote is eagerly listened to and many times repeated, and, of course, altered out of recognition. As to his public functions, the growth of friendly relations between France and England during his tenure of the Embassy is a sufficient guarantee of his success in those. He is far removed from the smooth-voiced diplomat recognised by all lady novelists as typical. He is an audacious teller of the truth when he thinks he will be believed, and perhaps a consummate teller of it when he knows he will not. This method keeps his adversaries constantly alert, and even his keenest opponents regret that he is to leave them without this stimulating pepper-and-salt diplomacy. He will take with him the good wishes of a very large number of people, both friends and enemies, and he would be the last to deny, and would probably regret it if it were not so, that in more than one quarter sighs of relief will be heaved at his departure. Life would be very dull to a man of character without a few good fights."

When Lord Bertie left Paris he was very ill—so ill that, when he apparently turned the corner towards recovery, the news was received even by his enemies

with an almost affectionate appreciation of the fact that it was " so like Bertie " to be dying one day and convalescent the next. Unfortunately the improvement did not last long, and his death takes away a man who, had he chosen to write his memoirs, would certainly have been revealed as one of the most vivid figures in the history of British diplomacy.

A chapter of those personalities cinematographed in my daily notes, with the imperfections of hasty judgment about them, will probably do more to give a picture of the leaders in France at the time than could be done by any elaborate portrait study done in the light of later events.

. . . . .

"General Lyautey, Minister of War in Briand's Cabinet, is a dark horse of another calibre. He came down upon Paris from his deserts, dervishes, and dates in a manner most theatrical. He arrived at Gibraltar in a submarine. His first action here was to upset all the apple-cart which had been laboriously balanced into a semblance of stability by Briand. He would hear of no half-measures. So Joffre had to go altogether. He went in the midst of a silence which most Frenchmen a few years hence will try to forget. Then Lyautey went to Rome, where he began to see that the problem of how the milk got into the cocoa-nut might not be so simple after all. He returned, chastened and puzzled, to make his bow to the Chamber. He is very deaf. The eternal compensation of Nature should therefore (as in the case of Mr. Hughes) have gifted him with silvern speech. Unfortunately, Lyautey's speech sounds rather like a cascade of coppers falling upon a tray of brass.

"In the Chamber, when he made his maiden utterance, the House was kind, but quite in the dark as to what he might have said. It was good to read in the

official shorthand report that he had the simple programme, already historical, of 'Work, command, and service.' None can doubt of his sincerity as to fulfilling this programme. He is of the type of long-suffering military patriots. The only thing he may perhaps want is that great political virtue, patience, and—who knows?—political virtues may be vices in the days we live in. He became impatient when, in a division on a Man Power Bill, he discovered that one of his colleagues in the Cabinet, the pallid Malvy, had actually voted against him. In his honest way he strode out of the Chamber, and, when he reached the haven of the ministerial room, he declared to his *chef de cabinet* that there were decisive moments in every man's life, and that he had reached one of them. Briand, who arrived post-haste, reassured him on the point, and urged that the moment for decision had not yet come. It came but a few days later, and with it Briand departed to make room for the aged Ribot."

. . . . .

"Seldom, even in French politics, has there been a figure quite like Ribot. He is the Grand Old Man of France, and is a wonderful example of what in the animal world is called protective colouring. The cases in the South Kensington Museum in which are displayed butterflies and moths resembling exactly the dead leaves and dead twigs of their surroundings, show what Nature can do in this direction. Ribot, ever since he began his public career in the magistracy of the Second Empire, has managed, quite successfully, to look exactly like the changing world around him. He is a fine figure of an elder statesman, and his great bowed frame, his long white locks, his somewhat shaky, venerable eloquence, always command respect in the Chamber. His last appearance as Prime Minister was a few months before the war,

when his Cabinet managed to exist for about one day. On that occasion, as Ribot left the House, he turned to the hooting Socialists, and, waving his hand heavenward, shouted with tremendous youthful fire, 'Vive la France!' His revenge, when he returned to power as Minister of Finance in Briand's war Government, was sweet. To-day it is complete. He is hailed for the moment as the Saviour of France."

"*May* 1917.—Pétain is a man who has a great reputation for hard hitting, but it must not be imagined that his advent will lead to any hazardous or audacious developments. He is a man who believes in hitting hard at the right moment, and in a military sense the right moment is only when you have preponderance of strength. In the recent Champagne offensive this was not the case. Indeed, the German defenders outnumbered the French assaulting troops. The French soldier may yet have to revise the crude and rhymed estimate of Pétain:

"'V'là Pétain,
Gare au potin.'

"His somewhat ironic vein of humour is shown in a story. The new Chief of Staff is asked what he considers to be the three indispensable qualities for a French general, and the reply is, 'Pluck, courage, and unlimited confidence in G.H.Q.' Then the story represents Pétain as adding reflectively: 'It might be better to place the confidence in G.H.Q. between pluck and courage, as otherwise it might run away.'

"Pétain's appointment is not the only change that has been made as the result of the Champagne offensive, and when Parliament meets there is almost certain to be a full-dress debate on the whole matter, and the Government will probably be able to show that if it has not dealt with incapacity with the

extreme rigour of the Revolution, it has, nevertheless, not allowed it to pass by without punishment.

"Nivelle, whom he replaced, is a very charming old Frenchman; he had rather a stirring time as Generalissimo. He was exalted in the stormy period of Briand's last reconstruction, and as a result Painlevé refused the portfolio of War. His claims to this distinction were twofold. He was a fine soldier, and shared in the lustre of the name of Verdun. He was a Protestant, and in these days of 'Republican' and 'Catholic' Generals it is as good to be a Protestant as it is to be a safe mediocrity if you want to become President of the Republic. As Commander-in-Chief Nivelle is responsible for but one operation of magnitude, the April offensive in the Champagne. In it he achieved only a certain measure of success.

"The appointment of Pétain as Chief of the Staff was the first result, as it was Painlevé's first victory. His second victory was the decree defining the duties of the Chief of the General Staff. Stripped of its official verbiage, it signified to all the world that Pétain had become the real Commander-in-Chief. In the course of a week-end even pretence has been dropped, and Pétain now rules supreme, with Foch—a doughty soldier—as Chief of the General Staff. Both generals are popularly supposed to be 'Clerical,' which in reality means that they are about as 'Clerical' as the members of a week-end party when they wander off to church on the Sabbath morn. Even so, their appointment at the instance of the real Republican Painlevé is an act of courage and an acknowledgment of the fact, which has been evident to all sane politicians for a long time past, that the people do not care a brass farthing who wins the war for them. The Pope himself might become Commander-in-Chief on those terms.

"Pétain has been in all the hard fighting of the war, in which he started as a colonel. But he is by no means a 'butcher.' Indeed, his tendency is in the other direction. He likes to husband men. This is leading, I find, to a completely erroneous impression that all that we can expect of him is a cunctatorial policy, worthy of Fabius or even of Mr. Sidney Webb. The new chief is not exactly a Parliament man, and it is fortunate that his claims should have been urged by a Minister who derives most of his power from staunch Radicals and Radical Socialists, for Parliament has always something to say on these occasions."

"*September* 1918.—Clemenceau becomes every day a more picturesque figure in the public imagination. He does not talk half as much as most public men, he comes and goes with complete disregard for the comings and goings of predecessors, by which it is always being suggested that he should abide; he does not care a jot for Minister or bootblack unless that Minister or that bootblack will help him win the war; and yet he bulks larger in the mind of the ordinary person than all the rest of the Government. M. Poincaré works hard at travelling about and saying the right things, but if Clemenceau visits a place we all nod wisely and think there is something special about his visit. We are particularly pleased when he goes to Noyon, because for such a long time he reiterated that the Boches were there. Like Lewis Carroll's witness:

> "'He said it very loud and clear,
> He came and shouted in our ear.'

"So it tickles us to read of him, or to see him on the cinemas, in tweeds and an absolutely disgraceful felt hat, sturdily tramping the streets of that martyred town. Twice he has gone there to shake hands with

it on its liberation; this time there is no one who doubts that he will never have to make another such visit.

"Perhaps the most startling thing about Clemenceau's present position is the fact that he might have been a pillar of the French Government all his days. He is so much France's man that nobody actively remembers that he ever held a more violent place in public life than would correspond to Leader of the Opposition at home. We seem to have been looking to him for guidance and reassurance for many years. Yet in 1914 his reputation was almost as turbulent as that of Mr. Lloyd George, and, had the two gentlemen at that time met, they would probably have found a subject of mutual interest at hand in comparing the respective degree of virulence in French and English abuse. It is wonderful what can be done, even under modern law, and in bad English or journalese French; the long tirades against our two Premiers (which now make the quaintest reading) made one weary for the days when Macaulay could freely use such beef-lozenges of language as calling a man who had annoyed him 'a filthy and malignant baboon,' and be done with it. Even abuse was vapoury and hysterical just before the war; now that the public wants to praise the men it used to hate so heartily it finds that the language of eulogy is even harder to handle with success.

"M. Pierre Veber, a caustic observer of Parliament, as most observers are who are not themselves politicians, obviously considers that the Premier's position is that of a Gibraltar raised above the petty troubles of the sea. He points out that the present Premier inherited the two affairs of the Austrian Emperor's letter, and the Malvy trial; that his Government

has seen the liberation of Paris, Épernay, Reims, Calais, from the German threat—curiously enough, he does not cite Amiens. These things put a Minister very firmly on his feet. But M. Veber does not mention that perhaps the most significant incidents of Clemenceau's office have been the negative facts that the victorious German advances of March and of May not only found him in power, but left him there. Even his enemies must admit that the history of France is peculiarly prolific in instances of Governments overturned because of national rebuffs. Perhaps some day a writer of political fiction will give us a study of France in the days 'When Warwick wore a Crown.'

"The motto might be:

> "'They came back from the ride
> With the Chamber inside,
> And a smile on the face of the Tiger.'

"We have naturally talked of but one topic for the last week; and we have mostly said the same thing. If Austria had wished to find out whether France were united in opinion she could not have hit on a better method than by launching a paper ark on the roaring flood of victory. Socialist and Royalist alike have answered with no uncertain voice; the lion would have lain down with the lamb had there been any lambs among French politicians, or, rather, the lamb would have stood up with the lion. A few voices speak with a little hesitation, but the Censor has deprived us of the doubtful pleasure of hearing all they had to say. The unison of the French Press is significant, for it does not usually sing very well in chorus, and would feel rather uneasy on any ordinary occasion to find itself sharing a hymn-book with its rivals.

"Clemenceau's speech at the opening of the Senate was one of those electrifying events which only eye-witnesses can properly appreciate, because it was obviously delivered under the stress of very strong personal feeling. There is not a man in France who more disdains the help of cheap emotional tricks in oratory than Clemenceau; if his voice shakes and he finds it difficult to speak it is because he is himself impressed, not because he is trying to work up a vulgar 'scene.' Therefore he impresses others.

" 'It has been said that I am not the man for peace; I know of no man who, by his antecedents, is qualified for that rôle. If you vote us your confidence we shall go with greater strength to the Peace Conference; but, if you have an instant of doubt, say so. It is the moment.'

"If Charles Stuart had dared thus to address Parliament we might have had a Stuart dynasty still. This was exactly the tone Clemenceau used to the Houses when he was knocking down Governments, except that in those days he never sounded so sure of himself, because he elaborated more. Albert Thomas replied that, if the authority of the Premier was not to be weakened, he must have behind him the immense majority of the country. The Deputies, tired and exasperated by an all-day sitting that was already nearly an all-night sitting, set to work to shout, 'But he has! But he has!' The Socialists started another of their Straussian 'Domestic Dissonances,' and Clemenceau, disdainfully careless as to the result of the vote, went off home to bed without knowing that he had swept up a majority of 398 against 93 on one amendment, and 380 against 134 on another. Doubtless he would have gone to the country for a much-needed week of rest had his majority been much feebler. He protests that he is willing to go out of

office, and would be thankful to do so, and there is no reason to doubt the truthfulness of that statement. At the same time, there must be, to a man of his vigour and his history, such a delight in living these moments, and in being privileged to lead his country through them, that one cannot commiserate with him in being kept in power by the will of the country he has helped to save, and, in the opinion of the huge bulk of the public, will help to secure.

"In the meanwhile he goes his way, and refuses to fritter his mental energy on side-issues. That has been his great force during the last year. In the history of Parliaments there are few, if any, Prime Ministers who would have treated the episode of the Emperor Carl's letter as Clemenceau did. It will be remembered that Czernin said that Clemenceau's statements were false. This was told him as he was leaving for the Front, in his capacity as Minister of War. 'Czernin was lying,' said he, and started for the Front, where he was overtaken by an agitated message to the effect that he had made no formal and publishable reply. 'Yes, I have,' said he. 'I said Czernin was lying.' This is perhaps the shortest and the healthiest chapter to date in the history of diplomacy.

"We are thinking of these episodes now because the attacks on him by M. Franklin-Bouillon and by the Socialists have ended in a clear exposition of the fact that the fire-eating Communist of 1871 is now our chief hope. He stands in the French mind at present for law, order, security, peace, and personal freedom to enjoy them—in fact, for all the things he seemed to detest forty-eight years ago. Yet his public utterances throughout his career have been consistent; if he fought in 1871 against the constituted forces of law and order it was because he thought they did not represent them worthily, and,

indeed, thought that those constituted forces had betrayed France. All this we remember to-day. He must know he has the country behind him, but perhaps he would be surprised to know with what a fervour of almost pious feeling he is surrounded. He is looked upon by the ordinary public as a symbol of France, and in that symbol the public is willing to vest its power to act."

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"'Sem' has been distinguishing himself. He has published in the *Journal* a series of drawings of men of the day. They are so strong (a word which I gather is, in artistic parlance, a synonym of brutal) that at first sight one always supposes the subject must be a Boche. 'Sem' is a quiet little man who perceives the flesh and the bones of a face as being merely illustrations of the character of the subject. He does not often seem to think the character a good one. His portrait of Mangin has roused a great deal of hostile criticism. It shows him square-headed, large-eared, with an under-hung jaw closed like a vice, and a pair of implacable eyes set above emaciated cheeks. Mangin is, of course, a puzzle to us all. Immensely admired by his friends and his staff, and a good many of his men, he is by others known as 'The Butcher.' I remember very much the same controversy about Buller in the South African War. He has a jaw certainly, so that anybody who has once heard him called 'The Butcher' will find confirmation every time he sees the General. At the same time, look at what the man has done! His friends say that the Tenth Army losses are no higher in proportion to Tenth Army achievements than they are in any other army. Civilians who note how many of the cannon in the Place de la Concorde have been taken by the Tenth Army are,

at any rate, impressed by the amount of butchery 'The Butcher' seems to have operated on the Boche."

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"Captain Mornet, until yesterday Lieutenant Mornet, is to be the leading figure in the Humbert trial. Humbert might dispute it in favour of himself, but no one who went to the Bolo trial imagines it otherwise. He even over-weighted Bolo himself, who was a much more impressive and inscrutable person than Humbert. As for the Duval trial, Duval and his gang were such a shoddy crew of adventurers that there was no question of their impressing us at all."

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Mornet is a man worth studying. He appears now as an implacable head-hunter. He likes them on chargers or in baskets, or anywhere, so long as they have really been taken, and represent a traitor safely dead and out of the way. He is positively terrifying in court. He has a way of turning his back to witnesses before asking them a question which invariably makes them stutter. With the witnesses on the other side he is gentler than with his own. He appears to think that the people who give evidence against traitors aren't much better than those who give evidence for themselves, as is the habit of witnesses called for traitors. He despises everybody, and, when he has asked his own witness something, and been answered satisfactorily, and flung himself back in his chair, and said, 'I thought so! I thought so! Just what I wanted!' you can see that witness wondering whether he has just incriminated himself beyond hope of redemption. Accused of murder, arson, high treason, petty larceny, or even of hitting dust-bins with a stick in the streets at night, and told that Mornet was prosecuting, I would plead guilty at once, even if I had been in

Capetown or Washington at the time cited. I would no more argue with him if he wanted my head than I would argue with a bull that wanted to toss me. There are some cows who can never have their hearts softened, even if you sit on a stile and continue to smile like a real cow-charmer.

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"Yet Mornet says he is not at all like that. He has been telling about himself, and it appears he likes fishing and shooting and a small country house, and when he was young he wanted to be a country notary, and there are people in the Santé prison who will with all their hearts wish to God he had had his way. He avows that he used to be a convinced opponent of the capital punishment. Now he sees his error, he says. 'War, prodigal of lives, changed my scruples. When so many are dying in heroism should one have pity for some vile and contemptible creature?'"

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"*July* 14, 1919.—The march of the troops through Paris gives the occasion for one or two notes on the great figures of that magnificent parade, which perhaps will not have been found in the daily papers. The French Army is the greatest school of strategy that exists. Marshal Foch, great man as he is, is perhaps not quite a Napoleon; but, if we take the first dozen of the generals who were the main artisans under Foch of the victory of last autumn, and whom it was my good fortune to see riding under the Arc de Triomphe, there seems no reason to doubt that they outmatch in brains, character, and loyalty, the marshals who abandoned Napoleon in 1814. Foch and Joffre rode side by side. The victor of the Marne, whom it is the fashion to lose sight of nowadays, old and stout, needing both hands for his horse, and per-

force tucking his marshal's bâton under his arm, was, I think, a little astonished to find himself there. Foch, on the other hand, looked young and triumphant, his marshal's bâton riding proudly on his hip save when he raised it to salute.

"The Year of Victory has rejuvenated our Generalissimo. Those who remember him as he was sixteen months ago find it difficult to recognise him. A friend who saw him at his headquarters at Beauvais last March twelvemonths, in the terrible days when there was a gap in our Front that a man could hardly ride across in a day; when Debeney and his staff were riding about in the open, occasionally sighting a German scout, and praying that the trains bringing the First Army from Lorraine would hurry to Montdidier; told me that, calm and wise as Foch appeared in speech and bearing, he looked so old, so wrinkled and careworn, that it was disturbing to see him. At that moment it seemed that the fate of civilisation was bowing the shoulders of a tired old man. My friend was mistaken, as he frankly admits to-day. The Marshal was never tired; and, whatever his years, he is not old.

"Victory has straightened the shoulders and smoothed the brows of the chiefs of the French Army. Pétain, erect and smiling on his white charger, is a very different man from the careworn soldier whom one saw at Compiègne and Provins, and even a few months ago, at Metz and Strasbourg. Pétain, when the war began, was a very senior Colonel, with a very great reputation for professional knowledge, and in almost immediate expectation of being placed on the retired list. It was he who stopped the Germans at Verdun in 1916. It was he who, when the French Army in the spring of 1917 went through the crisis which brought defeat, final and irretrievable, nearer to us

than it ever was at any other moment of the war, took the command from the failing hands which relinquished it, and in the space of a month tuned up an army which was on the verge of dissolution from sheer fatigue, disappointment, and disillusionment, to the highest pitch of fighting excellence. All honour to Pétain, who worked the miracle with the minimum of punishment and the maximum of tenderness and consideration for the common soldier. Pétain, having been Commander-in-Chief for a year, effaced himself cheerfully when it became a question of nominating Foch to the supreme command. He had dodged advertisement with almost prudish care. He would never allow a war correspondent either to see him or to speak about him. Last November, when victory was in his clutch, and the officers of Grand Headquarters who, to a man, revered and loved him, finding that he had no intention of being present at the entry of the troops into Metz, insisted that he, as Commander-in-Chief, must be there, he answered: 'What does it matter whether Mangin or I go there?' He is a great man.

"The Generals can be summed up more briefly. First among them in the hearts of his countrymen, and best beloved by the *poilu*, is Gouraud, handsome, charming, and heroic. Gouraud has one of the handsomest heads that fate ever planted on human shoulders. His eyes would make the fortune of a professional beauty; the charm of his manners would have led him to easy success in any walk of life. His brief tenure of command in the Dardanelles was ended by a shell which emptied his right sleeve and maimed his right leg. Nowadays the title of 'hero' is of frequent application. Gouraud deserves it. In spite of his mutilations, he has made himself, through sheer faith and will-power, an active man. During

most of the war he was Commander of the Fourth Army, with his headquarters in Châlons. An ordinary man in the same circumstances would have thought his main duty was to nurse himself. He nursed his army, and, through his army schools, most of the other armies of France. It was Gouraud who stopped dead the German onslaught of July 15 a year ago. He had methodically prepared every inch of the ground beforehand, taken every precaution, and correctly estimated every danger. But if the bull rush of the Germans broke in his forward defence zone, and never reached his main lines, the reason was that the men who held the advanced zone loved him, and would not give way. He did his best for his army, and his army did their damnedest for him.

"A figure of quite another kind, but not less striking, was Mangin, the conqueror of Morocco, the mainstay under Nivelle of the counter-offensive of 1916 at Verdun, the man who broke the Crown Prince's offensive on the Matz in June 1918, the organiser and successful leader of the counter-attack of July 18, 1918, which brought the Germans scurrying back across the Marne, and sealed their final defeat. The time has not yet come to decide why a weak Government and a demoralised War Office deprived Mangin of his command after the April attack on the Chemin des Dames of 1917. Another friend has christened Mangin 'the Last of the Borgias.' With his *condottiere* head, his youthful figure, and his reputation for victory and for hardness, Mangin was to the instructed eye the most formidable figure of all who rode in Saturday's parade. Debeney, hard fighter and hard calculator; Degoutte, lately chief of the Sixth Army, but better known as Commander of the Moroccan Division, the 'stiffest thrusters' of the French Army; Humbert, brilliant and gallant, who

headed off the Boche in March last year; Castelnau, who broke the German at the Grand Couronné and saved Lorraine; Fayolle, who commanded the Sixth Army south of the river during the battle of the Somme, directed the Italian defensive campaign of the winter of 1917, and last year was Foch's organising hand,—all these formed a group of chiefs, tried and proven, such as never rode in the wake of any conqueror from Alexander to Napoleon. In these days we talk much of the abolition of militarism as a result of the war. The truth is that France has at her disposal, at the present moment, a staff of generals such as neither Frederick nor Napoleon ever possessed, and who are the heroes, if not the idols, of their countrymen."

CHAPTER XI

PARIS UNDER FIRE (1918)

PARIS has heard many kinds of bombardments since the first "five o'clock Tauben" of 1914 acquainted her with the noise of hostile projectiles. Towards the end of her experience the sound of her own barrage during an air-raid was perhaps the most impressive of all. Undoubtedly the most terrifying racket was the system of warning adopted at the end of 1917 when an air-raid was expected. The maroons in London were startling, but when we heard a mixture of fire-alarms, guns, trumpets, and such sirens as would have sent Ulysses flying, we knew that the raids themselves, save for the element of personal danger, were less trying to the nerves.

It was some time before the civilian allowed himself to admit that he was frightened. The fighting man could do so with a clear conscience, because he knew that everybody is frightened when in danger. The civilian, horribly oppressed by his own safety, was ashamed to go to his cellar, ashamed to have a fire and a roof and four walls, ashamed to have his own bed and regular hours of rest; there were moments when he was ashamed of what he called his "wretched little raids," because the fighting man wrote home saying how anxious he was, and how heroic Paris was, and what a fine set we comfy civilians were, and when that happened we all but hoped that the next raid would at least snip a fingernail from us, or give us trench fever, or frozen feet.

The lot of the civilian in Paris was not a happy one. If he was too old or too young to give his service, he fretted for his years or his youth; if he was merely a she, she fretted for her petticoats. Anyhow, we fretted. Air-raids and bombardments of course frightened us, and when we had had a few people up on leave who went to the cellars as a matter of course during air-raids, and said, "This does give me the blue funk!" we began bravely to admit that we were frightened. Yet even our fright was some sort of consolation to us; everybody who thought of the Front was glad to feel that the air-raids made us temporary soldiers; and I believe that if we could have been assured that we ourselves could promenade the streets at the imminent danger of violent death or disablement, without involving anybody else, the streets of Paris would have been crowded as they were for the return of the armies. It was illogical, but logic has little to do with nature; and it was nature's revolt against the gulf fixed between our lot and that of the men in the trenches. We were far more ashamed of being safe than the soldier was of being afraid; and even when the blood seemed to be running up our veins instead of down, and our hair was on end, and a dreadful nausea of fear was occupying the chief part of our attention, still we had some indomitable little voice crying to our afflicted selves that for a few minutes we need not be ashamed because for a few minutes we were not safe.

The bombardments of Paris began on August 30, 1914, with the visit of a German aeroplane, which very coolly dropped five bombs and departed. Air-defence scarcely existed then, and the marauder came back at his leisure for the next three days, dropping never less than two, nor more than eight, bombs. During October the same sort of thing

occurred twice, but that was the last we heard of the Tauben. We looked upon them as fore-runners of the Zeppelins we all expected and talked of. Zeppelins had captured our imagination; there was something in their great bulk that made them fascinating to the thought. I cannot say why we never attached to the daylight raids the same sinister, witch-like quality with which we viewed the idea of a visit from Zeppelins; except, perhaps, that they *were* daylight creatures, and did their work openly, and without the complicity of the powers of darkness.

In the following spring we heard much about anti-aircraft measures, and I am sure it would make a dying airman laugh to recall those measures. When we were told to darken our windows we honestly thought we were doing it when we hung a dark linen blind before it. We had yet to learn what the verb "to darken" meant in this connection. As for anti-aircraft guns and gunners, they were toys and children compared with their successors. London went through the same education. The public had the vaguest notions of height, never having had to calculate the distance above them of any object in the sky; and when the Zeppelins paid us their first visit they were greeted by revolver and rifle-shots from excited soldiers, as well as by more official fire! One of the dangers of the Taube raids also had been the zeal with which everybody who could lay hands on a fire-arm discharged it into the blue; including one energetic policeman, who ran up a street beneath the tranquil bird of destruction, and emptied every chamber of his revolver into the unperturbed zenith.

The Zeppelins came only twice; at least they only arrived twice. On several other occasions they made the attempt, and once or twice we were told to put out our lights. Considering the extreme modernity

of the occasion there was something quaint in the mediæval fashion of the announcement; suddenly there would be the sound of policemen running in the quiet street, in unmistakable police boots, and a voice crying: "Éteignez vos lum-ières, éteignez vos lumièrrrrres!" which one could hear becoming small and faint as the runner turned the corner. Sometimes the runner came before the fire-engines, sometimes afterwards. The fire-engines sounded their melancholy semi-tone bells, but had no other means of conveying their message, so nobody knew whether there was a fire or a raid.

The Zeppelins were a failure. They dropped seven bombs in Paris one night in 1915, and seventeen one night in 1916, and then we heard no more of them. They gave it up, and devoted their attention to London, until London developed methods of defence which proved too efficacious. In France the unwieldy ships sailed through the dark in any portion of the Front they could manage to cross, but they never reached Paris again, and after a while did not try to.

From January 1916 till January 1918 we lived in peace; on the defensive, but tranquil. Our street-lighting had been reduced, and stayed reduced, and we were very sarcastic about the economy of the municipal authorities in thus sheltering behind a vague menace their desire to save money and charge us the same rates. The coal shortage had not dawned upon us then. We were also very sarcastic about London's pitch-dark streets, not foreseeing the day when Eblis would have seemed bright by comparison with any side-street, and on the boulevards themselves every distant lamp became a polar star by which one had to navigate with care in order to cross the road.

The bombardments of the first nine months of 1918,

apart from the news from the Front, were very largely the history of Paris in that period. They certainly occupied our attention to a great extent, and during the first days of the German advance distracted it to such good purpose that the very panic the Germans were trying to create was frustrated by the big gun and the Gothas. There certainly was a panic, but its scope was limited.

We had three nocturnal raids in the early part of the year, and the size and power of the explosives used were such as to cause several modifications in our lives. An official notice begged us to go to our cellars when the warning was given, and we went, Then the news got abroad that we must expect mustard-gas and other gas-bombs to be dropped, and another official notice told us we must block up with cement the ventilators of those cellars. As soon as that was done, of course, thick coats of blue mould sprang out upon the camp-chairs and the candlesticks with which one had installed the wretched places; wood and coal became so damp that it sizzled in the grate when brought up from these reeking caves. This fact gave us an excuse for not going downstairs, on the plea that there were ninety-nine chances of pneumonia to one of a bomb, and most people gave up with a sigh of relief the dreary attempt to be sociable in mixed and insufficient raiment during the small hours, by the light of a candle.

Paris, of course, produced her cellar-stories, as did London; and, I daresay, much the same ones. We all have an interest in each other's experiences on these occasions, so perhaps I may recall one or two of those which date from Paris. The first time I ever went to the cellar was in the company of an Englishman and a Frenchman, the latter one of the keenest spirits that ever observed human nature, whose

priest's frock clothes a man of knowledge and breadth and wit worthy of the country that bred Voltaire.

He was silhouetted against a single candle which obscured rather than lighted a long vaulted corridor. He was smoking a cigar, and he carried a glass in his hand which contained a liquid comforting and golden. He congratulated himself and us on his presence of mind in suggesting that we should bring these comforts with us; and upon this there floated an awed whisper from the corridor, to the effect that now we were quite safe, since no trouble could befall a house which sheltered a priest, and why did he not put his ghostly counsels into French rather than English? This was from a devout Spanish lady, who, in spite of her conviction that the whole house was safe, seemed to think that the nearer she kept to the priestly silhouette the better.

Tremendous thumping and throp-thropping continued outside, and the more timorous of those vague shadows in the corridor reproved the more hardy for talking, on the strange ground that one couldn't hear when there was talking, and that it was so terrifying to hear! Subsequently I found that our arrival in normal spirits in the cellar had come in time to quell a violent discussion on the ethics of being cheerful at such times. The theory was that it was very wrong to smile and be cheerful when people were suffering. Well, on those grounds we ought to have been utterly dismal for four years. The opposition, which had been in contact with "le phlegme britannique," whose household staff it is, replied that when we were in danger ourselves we had a better right to be cheerful than at any other moment since the war began. The discussion was becoming lively, when we arrived, and the first thing I heard, to my bewilderment, was my cook's triumphant

whisper to her opponent: "You'll see, Madame will do it before one minute"—"it" being to laugh.

Another amusing vignette of cellar-life was that of a lady very bored at having to turn out from her fireside at midnight, and descend to a cellar where twenty or thirty people were standing who had not had the forethought to provide themselves even with packing-cases for seats. One of them was holding a candle, and my friend thought she might as well profit by this to go on reading *Trilby*, but found it difficult, since the torch-bearer and the torch wavered and trembled to a wonderful degree. "Couldn't you hold the candle a bit straighter, Madame?" said the reader; and the reply was: "It's *impious* to read, Mademoiselle!"

In a certain very rich quarter of Paris lives a diplomatic personage and his family, whose acquaintance is on many scores highly desirable, but whose position makes it necessary that he should choose his friends with care. He is the father of utterly adorable small sons, and on their account the household always went to the cellar during air-raids. And there he had to watch the unquenchable sociability of childhood wrecking in ten minutes the months of care which he had devoted to keeping civilly aloof from his neighbours: his children clambered over concierge and profiteer, smiled at social climber and boot-boy, and could not understand how infinitely preferable were the concierge and the boot-boy. The next day came, of course, fulsome recognition on the stairs, enquiries after the children, presents of sweets, and so forth, until the diplomat had seriously to consider changing his flat.

The concierge of Paris was a study during the worst period of the air-raids. Quite as anxious to save his skin as anybody else, he still felt that it was

his business to present a bold front, and usually compromised between his fears and his pride by hovering about on the cellar-steps. In most cases he (or she) drew the line at coming up to the ground-floor to open the hall-door, which nobody else can do in a Paris house without his permission. It happened to many people, especially during the dark months, to find themselves caught in an air-raid before they could reach home, and then to find themselves marooned on their own doorsteps, shrapnel falling round them and bombs exploding in every direction, while they fruitlessly rang the bell, and knew that the concierge was sitting in the cellar shrugging his shoulders and saying "Let 'em ring!" like the parrot in the story.

As the raids grew more serious and more frequent, in every street houses were set aside as public shelters' and bore upon their front doors large placards saying how many people could be accommodated. Tenants of these houses were rather dismayed by the selection of their own building, because the police insisted very naturally that the door of a public shelter must be left open during a raid. Not a few thieves took advantage of the fact that concierge and tenants were all in the basement to steal upstairs through the open door and bring off a profitable bit of business on the first or second floor.

The public shelters were very popular at first, but when they proved admirable breeding-grounds for scarlet fever and measles and influenza, people became a little shy of them. A few pacifists tried to use them as breeding-grounds for defeatist opinions, but they met with a warm reception. One instance of this was a politician who tried to beguile the time of an air-raid by explaining that France might just as well give in, as Germany was bound to conquer.

Finding him intolerable, two or three men present seized him by the collar and took him for a walk to the police-station, through the very worst zone of one of the worst raids we had.

Altogether we had only fourteen nights in '18 when we were raided, but on some of them we had two visits from the birds of death, and on several nights we had warnings. Of notes made during the time, I find a few which may be interesting:

"It was with weariness and shivers that we opened all our windows the other night when the raid-alarm was given, shut the shutters, and then, secure of having done what the Government asked us, made up the fire and sat amidst overcoats by it.

"Occasional visits to the window showed a star-spangled sky (without stripes, perhaps by oversight), a moon lying lazily on her back like a girl in a hammock by the Thames, the travelling stars of a few tracer-shells and distant glints of breaking shrapnel. A noise like people practising thunder in a theatre accompanied this peaceful and beautiful drop-scene.

"Presently the buglers came round, with their merry and impetuous 'Sing a song of safety; nothing in the sky,' and we warmed our blue hands and went to bed. And two days later we heard that all our discomfort, all the activities of the gunners, all the ratepayers' money in the form of munitions, had been expended on a strayed Frenchman who had exhausted his supply of signals! We were so exasperated that we could hardly have felt worse had our earnest attempts to kill him succeeded.

"*March.*—There is really a kind of satisfaction in the idea that Paris is no longer behind London in her daily risk of raids. It felt horrid to be quite safe when we knew Londoners were being bothered every fine night. We have caught it pretty badly in the last

fortnight, and feel now that we are shoulder to shoulder with the sister-city.

"There has been much self-control. There was the awful business of thirty children and twenty-nine women killed in a panic, it is true, but that panic was due to the illogical habit of this logical nation, which builds its swing-doors to open towards you instead of away from you. The first people arriving at the Métro station where the panic occurred had not room to open towards them the entrance doors and were crushed against them by the following crowd.

"There are endless stories to tell. At the Leave Club a large number of British soldiers from the home islands and from overseas were dancing to the music of an orchestra composed of girls. A bomb fell immediately outside the building; the tinkling of glass on the ballroom floor was not quite drowned by the noise of twisting iron, shattered pillars, and frightened cries from outside which immediately followed the first stupefying crash of doom. That orchestra paused, as some one speaking will pause if a door is suddenly banged behind him, for one second; then the girls took up the strains of the waltz and Tommy footed it again.

"In the first raid, at the Antoine *Antony and Cleopatra* was in progress, and, when it finished, so was the raid. So the cast improvised an entertainment until the 'All clear' should sound; they also, when the bombs were at their worst, organised a collection among the audience 'for the victims of the raid now going on.' They might have been collecting for themselves, for all they knew!

"At the Français, Anatole France's first night of *The Corinthian Marriage* had the sonorous accompaniment of bombs and cannon. The play is an

indictment of Christianity, by a self-avowed atheist. When one listened to the works of self-avowed Christians, in the form of dropping bombs outside, the ironic conjunction was certainly unpleasant.

"In one place a bomb dropped just in front of a taxi, and made a hole so completely corresponding to the cab that dropped into it that they looked as though one had been measured for the other.

"The bomb itself went down into the sewer, which grows very near the surface in Paris, and I could tell you more about the hole, into which I was privileged to look, and the taxi it had so neatly enclosed, if the turbid yellow flood beneath had not smelt so extremely unpleasant! It is, perhaps, foolish to escape death one night and object to a nasty smell the next morning; but human nature has these oddities in it.

"The chauffeur did not mind the smell. He was the only person on his cab, and when it went in, doing the neatest of somersaults, he went in too. He didn't get a scratch from either bomb or fall or somersault, and has not yet developed typhoid from the sewer. I saw him debonair and picturesque, in blue shirt and scarlet belt and brown riding-breeches, cigarette in mouth, climbing down that hole the next day to see whether his engine was all right! So much for the excitable Latin temperament!

"Cellar psychology is an absorbing study. Here it is considered frivolous, almost impious, to talk in an ordinary voice, let alone to laugh. The reason given is that 'others are suffering.' Yet Paris has talked (ye gods! how she has talked!), laughed, eaten, gone to the theatre, during the last three and a half years, and one of these raids is a fleabite, perhaps even the bite of one of the lesser fleas, compared with any hour endured in the trenches. My concierge seemed astounded at the view that, while we are

living, a long face is the face that the Kaiser wants us to pull, and that, if we die, a smiling one can hardly offend a beneficent God. However, she found a small and quavering smile somewhere, and put it on and wore it; and, of course, immediately felt better.

"The windows of Paris are coming out in cubist patterns of paper, which is supposed to increase their resistance to bomb-shock. The white-and-brown paper crosses and squares and lattices are not ugly, but my opposite neighbour, with a light-heartedness for which I honour him, and a taste for which I could wish his every window smashed, has blossomed forth into long strips of sky-blue paper, adorned with pink paper rosettes where they cross. It is afflicting from over the way, and the mind boggles at what it must be like to live inside it. The French are delighted with this notion of paper, and like to think it the strongest reinforcement possible, thereby hoping to avoid the unwelcome injunction to leave their windows open."

Some of the designs were very elaborate, suggesting a mixture of futurism and Euclid. Others spelt the names of the firms whose windows they were supposed to protect, some represented flowers or plants, and a few, mostly done roughly and obviously by amateurs who had no part in the industry of window-papering which had sprung up, ran to the length of whole phrases, such as "On les aura," which lost its last three letters on November 11, and became "On les a!"

Sandbags began to enter very largely into the scenery of Paris at this time, and they afforded us more than one of those cynical jokes in which the city delights. It was weeks before Rude's great group on the Arc de Triomphe was encased properly, because one side of the sandbag stockade always fell down before the other was finished. The lower part

of the Vendôme Column was sandbagged, but one wet night sufficed to demolish that protection, and it was afterwards cemented in. Little wooden huts like hats appeared above the principal statues of Paris, and all this scheme of protection increased very much when once Bertha had begun to bombard us. This she did on March 23, a brilliant day, like summer; and a great puzzle she was to us.

At seven a.m. loud, determined, short noises burst out of an empty sky at twenty-minute intervals. They were not loud enough to be factories blowing up; and, besides, factories don't blow up by time-table; they didn't reverberate like bombs, and besides there was no barrage and no noise of aeroplanes. The telephones everywhere tinkled like mad with people asking other people what on earth (or under the earth) was happening; and the only elucidation anybody got was from the interpolations of the telephone operators, who, no matter where their exchange was situated, always assured us very earnestly that "it," whatever it was, "had fallen close by."

Parisians always consult their emotions and sensations. Under the emotion of mystified fear they retired to the cellars; at midday, under the sensation of natural hunger, they came up for no more heroic a purpose than to have luncheon. If you are frightened you go where safety is, and if you are hungry you go where food is. That is a natural law, and we followed it.

The loud noises ceased, but we wandered from window to window, from window to telephone, for hours. All communications were stopped, as was the rule during air-raids; people in the Underground walked to their destinations through the tunnel; trams and buses stopped dead. It was just seven

when the first sounds were heard, and, as the traffic stopped at once, save for single vehicles, no work-people could get to their places of business, and shops remained shut all day.

When the afternoon papers came out we learned that we were being bombarded by a gun that carried 75 miles! Of course, we did not believe it. Who could? Yet it obviously could not be anything else, unless the French artillery had gone out of its mind, and turned a '75 upon us at short range. Trade was paralysed, but not so Rumour! She told us of treachery in the French rear-lines; of the Boche breaking through and trotting up a heavy gun in his pocket, as it were; of balloons dropping bombs.

This bombardment coincided with the news of the German advance, and it cleared the city of over a million people. They were a good riddance. They consisted of the old and the ill and the children, and also of just the kind of person a city can best spare in moments of danger—the terrified pessimist. They got away, and the rest of the population, after two days of stupor, settled to "sticking it."

A long and peaceful week-end, with brilliant summer weather, and nothing to do but wait for news, would have been very trying; but with bombardment by day and air-raids at night we were kept on the go, and such nerves as we allowed ourselves were personal, not national.

We had some fun out of our own excitements. One afternoon I was in a cinema, where a big gun was shown in action. The orchestra made the appropriate noise for gun-fire, which we had heard every week for three years during the army films, without noticing it very much. But the voice was so exactly the voice of Bertha, as we had heard it at breakfast-time, that cries arose of "Excellent! Excellent!

Very good indeed!" I hope the hidden artist in the orchestra felt pleased.

A couple of minutes later the screen announced: "Good News for the Public"; and immediately proceeded to show us a gendarme beating on a drum. Now a gendarme beating on a drum was the prescribed alarm for a bombardment here, and we had heard it for the first time that morning! The film had, of course, been taken a week before, and represented the town crier of a small village giving out news that the Government would pay for all windows broken in the recent explosion. But the coincidence was funny, and we laughed—how we laughed!

Just the same we were rather ashamed of having thought so much about Bertha, in view of what was going on up at the Front.

"It is humiliating to think that, while our men were facing desperate odds, we sat in cellars and shivered for our precious civilian skins—skins that can't even be tanned to any useful purpose after we're dead. If we were tigers, of course, or ermines or sables, it would be different. We could be worn out to dinner at restaurants. But humans aren't good to eat, nor to wear, nor to get warm in, nor to hang on walls, nor even to decorate a cellar with once they are dead; and lots of us aren't much more useful even while we're alive!

"*June.*—When the big gun began talking again, after a silence of a month, she was received with indifference as regarded herself and concern as regarded her meaning. A man's voice under my window greeted the new and unexpected explosion with: 'Aha! Old Lady! That you? Then the offensive has begun, citizens. *On les aura!*' He went singing down the street, and the song, though unrepeatable, was in spirit all that could possibly be desired. It

dealt with the fortunes of the Hun in this world and the next; a reference to the more vigorous Old Testament prophets will give an idea of its scope.

"Life in Paris is really extremely uninteresting for the moment. Our bodies are here, our appetites, especially on meatless days, are here, all our inconveniences are here; but the main part of us is anywhere between Verdun and Nieuport. Bertha brings us momentarily back, but cannot distract our attention for long. The Gothas make us swear, because the *alerte* is really a noise which nobody can bear with equanimity, and it is always annoying to have to get up after having gone peaceably to sleep. Besides, most of us are older than we used to be, and do not look our best when suddenly roused. We regret these things, with that cutting form of regret which has no concealed pleasure in it; but we do not concentrate upon them, being penetrated with a notion that the events on the front matter more than the sentiments of the civilians behind.

"Even the Chamber has not raised its voice. M. Clemenceau is a political Harbutt; he has invented a plasticine which will keep the children quiet for hours, making them only moderately dirty, and amusing them to such a point that they do not even wish to make any noise.

"Straws are proverbially significant for those who study the wind. M. Raemackers, just back from the French front, tells of an American who appeared from a dug-out just in time to have a hair-breadth escape from a shell which by some extraordinary accident burst upon the ground when it was directed against a hostile aeroplane. Said the American, with irony, but without irreverence: 'Nearer, my God, to Thee!'—and continued on his way.

"The British Government may have done a good and



THE FRENCH ARMY COOK.

D'après l'image éditée par la librairie Lutetia, 66 Boulevard Raspail, Paris.

Christian thing in consenting not to bombard German towns behind the lines on the day of Corpus Christi. The effect in France has been to make both French and British what our newest Allies are pleased to call 'hopping mad.' The Pope has kept his protestations so rigidly within ration limit that the French can hardly understand his making an exception in favour of a procession in Cologne. Still less do they understand our tolerating, let alone agreeing, to his request. 'And Good Friday?' they say. 'And Belgium? And the *Lusitania*?'

"The most eloquent remarks I have heard on the point were made by my housemaid, aged twenty, newly from the depths of Normandy. Scarlet with excitement, and stuttering between natural indignation and respect for the nationality of her mistress, she burst forth with: 'Oh! if I knew how to fly an aeroplane I'd steal one and go to Cologne and drop bombs and bombs! What they want is a regiment of women among the aviators; *they* wouldn't care what the Pope said; and anyhow, the good God would pardon them quick enough.' She added the regrettable and libellous statement that the Pope is more Boche than the Kaiser, and that she wished she could get at him.

"I write on the day of Corpus Christi; it has come, but not yet gone, and the Ides of March may yet finish tranquilly. However, since midnight, we have had an air-raid, and seven shots from the big gun, three of which fell at the hour when the devout would presumably be at early Communion. These things cannot diminish admiration for the *beau geste* of the British, but they do considerably increase the public rage with them! There is a kind of rage which breeds no bad blood, the rage of admiring exasperation. Should Bertha fire again, or Gothas arrive, before

midnight, we shall, as a nation, have entered ourselves once again in the French mind as generous madmen.

"But Bishop Hatto's fate would be enviable compared with the Pope's in his tower by the Tiber, were he liable to the attention of an army of Normandy housemaids and others who agree with my little angry creature who would like to steal an aeroplane."

The bombardments by the big gun were at first easy to deal with, because they fell in regular lines across Paris. Afterwards they were more erratic, but by that time one had reached a state of fatalistic calm, and felt that there was no use in taking precautions. Besides, there were events on the Front which took most of our attention. The German advance was terrifying. The worst days of 1914 seemed come again, and this time we were four years more versed in war and its horrors, and could understand better with what we were threatened. We saw an abyss of scarlet and black before us. After four years of heroism and endurance, after four years of civilian patience, after four years of tested faith in victory, the solid ground beneath our feet threatened to fail, and the Promised Land seemed a feeble dream.

We never said so. The people who remained in Paris kept their flag flying. They walked abroad with cheerful countenance, and even from their nearest and dearest they kept with religious perseverance the fact that death was threatening all in which they believed. We felt that you should—

> "Force your heart and nerve and sinew
> To serve your turn long after they are gone,
> And so hold on when there is nothing in you
> Except the Will which says to them, 'Hold on'!"

When the blind beast, Bertha, fell through the roof of a church on Good Friday, and killed and wounded

a hundred and fifty people who were praying to the Crucified, we held on; when every day the Germans came nearer, we held on; and when they came so near that we could no longer blink the fact of their nearness, we held furtive consultations as to what arrangements we could make if we had to walk out of Paris at one gate while the Germans walked in at another.

Officially, this form of heroic bluff was impossible. Persons whose office made them responsible for numbers of other people, or large interests of others, had to admit that the situation was of the gravest. Paris banks sent their securities and their books far south; Ministries hastily scattered their documents; our own Embassy arranged a scheme by which the British Colony could at need be evacuated in barges, and got into trouble for doing so, because those arrangements were too explicit an acknowledgment of what threatened us.

During this very time Paris was a dream of loveliness. I wrote:

"The Bois de Boulogne is absolutely enchanting these days. No private car and no taxi may enter it, unless the occupants can prove that they have business on hand either in the Bois or beyond it, and are not merely careering about on pleasure, using petrol that ought to be saved for national purposes. The result is that the wide, smooth roads and the little winding thoroughfares among the trees are empty save for cyclists and peaceful horse-cabs, or an occasional private carriage drawn by some lovely specimen of horseflesh which it is a joy to see. There is no smell of petrol, no blue vapour, no patches of green-black oil in the roads, no hooting and grinding and roaring, and no particular reason to expect sudden death at every corner.

"I walked through the Bois the other evening, under the fresh young green of the trees, and stopped in the very middle of the Avenue des Acacias for the fun of being able to do it. In the ordinary way you might as well do this as stand in the Mall by Marlborough House. However, in the whole long stretch of the avenue I could count eleven cyclists, some scattered pedestrians, and one horse-cab, whose somnambulist horse was drawing a driver and two fares, who were all asleep.

"There is no doubt the Bois is much more pleasant like this. It is, however, not yet forbidden to a particularly hungry little midge, in numbers like the sands of the sea, and to a plague of large, thin, pointed, utterly black flies, which no one has ever seen before, and which one friend declares must have been dropped in a bomb during the last air-raid. They certainly look wicked enough to have been made in Germany.

"A penknife, a tree-trunk, and a flirtation are a happy mixture, as any one may see who enters the Bois by the Porte Dauphine, and examines the trees, denuded of their bark, which border the roadway to the lakes. On their smooth, pale surface many inscriptions have been carved, some rudely, some with care, and thousands of others have been scribbled in pencil. For the most part they consist merely of names, but a few of the scribes and sculptors have recorded sentiments and ideas which are sometimes more candid than discreet, but are nearly always affectionate.

"One thing is very obvious: Tommy has not failed to enjoy his promenades in the Bois, nor has he lacked company; and apparently New Zealand, Australia, and Canada have had the times of their lives there! A carved heart, rather lop-sided, contains the signi-

ficant names 'Jack and Liette.' On another tree we can read:

"'It's a long way to Tipperary,
A long way to go,
Good-bye,
You're the sweetest girl I know.'

"A Frenchman, perhaps rendered impatient by all this dalliance, has burst out into an indignant French version of 'We've got to do in the blighters!' and Tommy has added: 'Boche no *bon*!' Four merry promenaders have modestly signed themselves: 'Four madmen.'

"If Tommy is not very good at learning French, he and his companions have evidently determined that the latter ought to learn English, and quite praiseworthy attempts in this direction are visible, of which two are worthy of mention: 'Plainty nice keisses for you me,' and this magnificent effort: 'My love you for never!'

"Meanwhile, the German is near enough to Paris to have purged the capital of most of the people who dine at first-class restaurants and can find petrol for their pleasure in spite of restrictions. Let us render to the devil that which is the devil's, and say to the Boche: For this relief much thanks. Paris is now very beautiful, clad in the passionate green of late spring, and lovely in the eyes of those who love her well enough to stay in her arms. The Place called de la Concorde bakes whiter and whiter in the sun, perhaps affected by the jam-hot ebullitions of the deputies across the bridge; for the rest, a pleasant half-solitude reigns under the chestnuts and magnolias; the Avenue Henri Martin has put on its greenest shade, and lacks but the melons on which to stumble; strawberries and cherries, fallen to the low estate of itinerant barrows, have left desolate the chefs of our

few remaining millionaires. What is a chef to do when all delicacies are in season, and the ordinaries of winter, such as apples and old potatoes, are not to be had, were even an American finger in a golden stall to beck? I know an American who never sees good wine but he piously cries: 'God help the rich; the poor can work.' He never drank his toast more usefully than now."

But unfortunately there were other considerations than those abroad. Politicians, especially when they are French Socialists, know neither time nor season. With the German advancing upon us, with air-raids tormenting us by night, and Bertha by day (and sometimes by night as well) there were still "scenes in the Chamber." Here is one, and it is typical:

The thing was grotesque; a Prime Minister who thought he could rely on the loyalty of his Parliament comes to the tribune, tired out with his exertions as War Minister, to answer a band of political hooligans who summon him to reply to their questions and then will not listen to him. Within ten minutes of the opening of the session the representatives of France are howling at each other like opposing factions at a football match. The President of the Chamber cries, "And meanwhile our soldiers are shedding their blood!" The tumult continues. M. Deschanel might have known, from a previous trial, that this appeal has about as much effect on angry Socialists as the voice of reason would have upon an epileptic.

Clemenceau's dignity never failed. No student of his life will believe that he is denied the privilege of a very healthy temper. He restrained it, throughout provocation which might have drawn a retort from a vegetarian conscientious objector. He left the tribune, it is true, but without petulance—just as would a practical man of business who sees no reason

to waste his time standing up and talking when he might be resting and getting on with his own thoughts beneath the tumult.

For three and a half hours Parliament pawed, whinnied, buck-jumped, champed, and foamed. At the end of that time the bit was still in the proper place in its mouth, and M. Clemenceau was not only still in the saddle, but had a new pair of spurs. Those three and a half hours were all to the glory of the French soldier and the honour of M. Clemenceau. The deputy must consent to go without either honour or glory on this occasion. The unified Socialists were primarily to blame, but the Government had no reason to thank its friends. M. Pugliesi-Conti, thinking apparently that M. Renaudel was being allowed too much licence to abuse M. Clemenceau, intervened in a manner which brought upon him from the Presidential throne fuller thunders than M. Deschanel had expended upon the most turbulent little boys of the extreme Left. M. Clemenceau, could he be suspected of prayer, might well be pictured retiring to a couch hallowed by a petition that not only the enemies of France, but the friends of the Government, might be delivered unto judgment.

For three hours and a half the majority of the Lower Chamber of France, and the whole Government, strove to prove to a few unruly creatures, who are such bad hosts that they can only entertain one bee at a time in their bonnet, that the middle of a battle on which the fate of civilisation depends is not the best moment for some civilians to ask a general for a reason why Lucifer was able to strike a match before he fell from heaven. The deputy for a city of France called Reims, who, one would have thought, might have been preoccupied with other subjects, danced like a marionette in front of the tribune and

indulged himself with what English lady novelists call repartee. The conversation, as accurately as it can be rendered, I think, went at one moment on these lines.

M. CLEMENCEAU (Premier of France, War Minister): "I have told you from the beginning that we must pass together moments difficult and hard, cruel hours. They come, these cruel hours. All the question is, are we of the kind to support them?"

M. DEGUISE (Deputy for Reims): "They come, yes. They come by your fault."

M. CLEMENCEAU: "When Russia collapsed. . . ."

M. DEGUISE (Deputy for Reims): "A fat lot you care for that!"

M. DESCHANEL: "I call you to order."

M. CLEMENCEAU (*unmoved*): "Who could believe that the released million of German soldiers would not come against us?"

M. Deguise (Deputy for Reims) and his friends, of whom he had fewer and fewer as the afternoon went on, continued to interrupt a statement which they had upset the tranquillity of all France to obtain from the Prime Minister. M. Clemenceau continued to make it. He knew very well that this was an offensive against the generals of France rather than against the Prime Minister of France. Since he chose to identify himself with these generals he was, nevertheless, involved in this offensive. There came a moment when he proclaimed what not even M. Brizon had denied—the magnificence of the French soldier, and said, "These good soldiers have good leaders. . . ." (Interruptions, shouts, applause, groans, excitements.) As soon as he could be heard again M. Clemenceau said, without rancour: "These good soldiers have good leaders. . . ." (Interruptions, shouts, applause, groans, excitements.)

If constant dropping can wear away a stone, the same is true of the repetition of a statement or a question, as the American Third Degree has proved upon many criminals and not a few innocents. The elderly gentleman who represents France in Parliament in indistinguishable dark garments, and at the Front in tweeds and a soft hat scarcely fit to offer to a refugee, stood at his post and repeated that these good soldiers have good leaders, and finally stated quite mildly that he would go on saying that these good soldiers have good leaders as many times as was necessary, until even M. Deguise (deputy for *Reims !*) had to allow him to go on saying what he and his friends had asked him to say.

He went on saying it. He also added what the unified Socialists may, or may not, have wished him to say (the ordinary person in France can never judge what a unified Socialist is likely to want or not to want) that the Chamber could throw him out or keep him, but so long as they kept him no peace would be made without victory, at no moment would peace be made without victory. The Left exclaimed, and M. Clemenceau extracted from the exclamation an invitation to repeat that at no moment would "we" capitulate without victory. He added that our men at the Front can only die, but that the people behind can support them by their will and their energy. "I say again that the victory depends on us, on condition that the civil powers rise to their duty." (Pause.) "I have no need to make this recommendation to soldiers."

M. Clemenceau, finding it necessary to draw this distinction between soldiers and Parliamentarians, did not fail to add a thing that the man in the street had known for three and a half years. "It is for the living to finish the magnificent work of the dead."

The Government majority was a surprise to no friend of France who believes in her essential virility. The sitting, nevertheless, went far to glorify the memory of Cromwell in France, as the man who dissolved a troublesome Parliament at a time of national crisis. The usher at the Chamber, however, is far too well trained to let any horseman dismount and knock at the door he is paid to guard. More's the——

Let us be civil to our deputies. Most of them are moved by patriotic motives, and all of them announce that they are. The defects of an election system which guards its prizes for citizens who ought to be making a livelihood out of missing word competitions—he who supplies the most gets the biggest prize—are not the fault of the prize-winners. So long as M. Clemenceau can dominate that system, or can find a successor who can dominate it, all is well.

"*June* 1918.—We are once again in the army zone. The Germans are once again in Noyon. Once more the cold-footed have left us, and once more we are glad they have. So far, 1918 is but repeating the events of 1914. But, though the likenesses of our states in those two years are striking, the differences are enormous. That is but natural, for we are different people. The people we were in 1914 are to us like old friends; we have lost sight of them, but we think of them often, and kindly, though we fear we shall never meet them again. Most of them are missing; lying awake in the terrible small hours, we know that some of them are dead.

"They were, on the whole, a pleasant race, kindly and livable with. We did not think so at the time, very often; we had worse times to go through with those selves we have left behind than ever we had with friend or enemy. But when I watch us in 1918, in almost

the same relation to outside events as those ghostly people were in 1914, I think we were hard on them then. They had an insane objection to bloodshed, and a perfect obsession that the other chap was a good sort and would act straight, until he had proved at least nine times that he wasn't and he wouldn't. They had never heard of asphyxiating gas, save as an unfortunate by-product of the laboratory, and the notion of using it as a weapon was a notion which, even after the events of the summer in Belgium, they would not attribute to the German himself. They thought, and wrote in their diaries, that 'sowing mines in shallow waters' was a crime, and they were unwilling to believe that their only enemy had done it. They did not hate anybody, they did not know how to. The sort of exasperated dislike you have for the people upstairs who leave the bath-room door banging and go out for the day, passed with them for ferocious hatred. They loved a fight and preferred it without gloves, because strength to strength and no cheating was such a good sort of thing. They loved their countries, and were ready to die for them; some of them would have died sooner than admit it, and others would talk about it until you thought they wouldn't do it, and then went and did it. Those were little differences of nationality, and didn't count.

"If those of us who are still young live to be very old, they may recapture a little of those vanished selves. The rest of us must be content to be the new people we are, and to get all the good we can out of the callosities we have contracted in four years. The only difference is an all-pervading one: *We have got used to the war.*

"We are still liable to personal fear, of course, and still in our degree can fight it. Otherwise, we are wholly changed. Our thoughts run on horrors they

had never imagined four years ago, and the ghastly figure of Death has deserted the postman and the telegraph-boy to hang upon the telephone-receiver. The 'No! Oh, don't say they have lost their eldest boy!' has changed into: 'Let me see, they've lost one or two of their boys, haven't they?' If we face our present problem with comparative quiet, it is not the quiet of heroism but of custom. Four years have quarried into the heart of Paris with the inhuman engines of modern science, and they have struck upon granite."

Then came the Americans, and Paris went mad. On the fourth of July she was a city crazy from end to end.

"To-day Paris has blossomed as never blossomed rose in Sharon. From her balconies and her windows heaven and the world's latitudes are expressed in Stars and Stripes. For to-day is the Glorious Fourth, and he who wears no American flag proclaims himself a niggard, an ingrate, a low fellow who will not return thanks for favours which, according to the Americans themselves, are still to come. In many places the opportunity has been taken to celebrate not only the Benjamin of the Allies, but his elder brothers, and the British, Belgian, and Italian flags can be seen floating in company with the French and the American. I have even, in a distant suburb, counted up on the thumb of one hand a blue and white flag, doubtless intended to show a hope of and for Russia. By the way, the absence of the yellow and black of the Imperial eagle robs our bunting of a note which made it very distinctive in those strange days of 1914 when Paris, silent, empty, sun-stricken, was yet gay with flags as though she were keeping a national feast.

"She is doing that to-day, by special authorisation. There are but two subjects of conversation in Paris—

the Fourth, and how many Berthas are going to fire at us before nightfall. As to the first, it includes the history of the United States, a summary of their masterly inactivity for three years and their miraculous activity in the last twelve months, their peoples, customs, language, and accent; as to the second, it is more varied. Nineteen Berthas were to spew hatred at us before dawn, but that can never come true now. Fifty of them are due at noon. Twenty-seven are waiting for the most crowded hour on the boulevards. Thirty-one . . . but I have no patience to count up the other rumours. I saw a book the other day called *The False News of the War*. It was amazing to see that it was a volume which any person of ordinary strength could carry. If it were a complete compilation it would need a train of lorries to transport it.

"Enthusiasm reigns, and merchants of American flags make much money. Soldiers in French uniform rush up to civilians and try to pin the Stars and Stripes upon their undecorated breasts. You pays your money and there ain't no choice to take. Yesterday, outside one of the biggest drapery shops of Paris, two ladies handled a Union Jack which lay on a great pile of flags for sale, and remarked in French on its cheapness. The salesman, unskilled in accents, was rash enough to explain the low price by saying that 'the Union Jack wasn't in season.' He received in reply the most eloquent discourse attainable by an indignant Irishwoman of unblemished loyalty; and an Irish brogue speaking French is an engine of war before which the most intrepid must quail. There is one Frenchman who will never again suggest that there is a close season in Union Jacks.

"Friends of France, among whom the Americans are certainly not the last to speak, are a little indignant at this Fourth of July. It is not seemly that the

soldier of Verdun should strap the untamed yellow gaiters of the raw recruit from the States. Generous enthusiasm and real gratitude have put France a little above herself; like a child at a party or a Bohemian at a café (not that there is much difference), she is over-excited. My cook, whose provincial head is difficult to turn, says wisely that if America wins the war for us, what remains for us to say? My housemaid, almost in tears, cries: 'But we've fought for four years!' The concierge says that unless it clouds over we shall have a raid to-night. Americans say that they wish they had already earned it, as they mean to do. The British say that England may yet come into the war. The French say that they dearly love America. 'And Bertha has not said a word.'

"There are harmless business men who went away for their summer holidays three weeks ago, and who are finding the utmost difficulty in getting back to their homes and their work.

"'No!' says the Entrenched Camp of Paris, 'you left me for your own reasons, and I for one don't particularly want you back. Give me a real good reason why I should want you back, and I'll see about it. But it must be a real good one. He that stays not when he may, When I will he stays away. And, mostly, I do will.'

"This is very hard on a number of hard-working business people who had no purpose in leaving the metropolis other than to take their summer holidays. But every regulation is hard on the people who innocently fall under a rule made to catch the guilty. Busy soldiers have something more important to do than to guard the safety of the sort of person who ran away in March, came back in May, and cluttered up the railway stations in a second panic in June; and that is just the type of citizen who, as a rule,

expects to have his safety looked after. He cannot grumble if it is thought better that he should guard himself . . . at Nice or Grenoble. He is out of the way there, and the Committee charged with the defence of Paris remembers that fact with the same kind of sigh that must have been heaved by the old woman who lived in a shoe when her children, graceless and supperless, were really safe in bed.

"M. Kerensky is here. He has said little, and has done nothing save to convoke French journalists to a meeting for which he was two hours late. His excuse was that he was still eating peaches at a quarter to five, because 'these gentlemen would not let him go.' As an ex-dictator this shows him in a light a little feeble, in the opinion of a country once ruled by Napoleon. When he did keep his appointment, he said that if there were traitors in Russia, so there were loyal people; that he trusted France, America, and England would remember the sacrifices that Russia had made, etc. Thiers went to sleep from mere exhaustion when he had put the case of France before Granville in 1870; Kerensky has not yet gone to sleep, but he certainly has not wakened up France to any appreciation of Russia's value to the present situation.

"Thiers had a comparatively easy task; and even so, he did not bring off a very big stroke. He dealt with countries which were not themselves fighting to save their national existence from annihilation. And France had betrayed no comrade in the hour of danger. If M. Kerensky is to succeed better than did Thiers in his grand tour of Europe and America he must certainly use other means than he has hitherto found, and he must certainly not allow his friends to detain him, eating peaches or otherwise, in restaurants until nearly five o'clock. The story must be untrue,

of course; no solid food may be eaten in French restaurants after half-past two in the afternoon; and who has ever heard of a French restrictive regulation being evaded by anybody? Doubtless nobody."

After these things came suddenly the week which will live as the most wonderful week in history.

"*July* 1918.—After a long pause of breath-holding, events and impressions have suddenly broken upon us as movingly as the river has broken through the dam at Milwaukee, in depths and eddies and foams and roarings. The Malvy trial, the offensive, Bertha, and some weather that looked like a counter-attack from Heaven, have followed the celebration of the Fourteenth. This week the man who committed suicide because he figured the number of times he must dress and undress himself would have dropped the revolver.

"*Sunday, 14th.*—Drizzling rain and grey skies at dawn; a composed but still countenance later on; a gently smiling face at sunset. The whole day echoed with the tread of marching squadrons, the pattering feet of unnumbered thousands of civilians, the isolated sword of bugles cutting between sky and earth a figure of victory, the crash of military music, the voices of children chanting so high that it seemed above the houses that 'le jour de gloire est arrivé.' The rumour of all this penetrated even to quiet flats. The British troops alone carried no flag in the procession. Why? Mankind has lost so much in the last four years that it clings more than ever to symbols. Besides, what about propaganda? The British seem to think that 'the old country would go to the dogs' if any propaganda were done.

"At midnight a deep, baying clamour broke the darkness. Housewives ran to see that gas-meters were turned off, bridge-players shaded their lights

more than ever, sleepers wakened, and the wakeful said, 'Now for the sirens.' But sirens there were none. This was no air-raid; the immense symphony of drums that sounded, now like a funeral march, now like a heavy waggon half a mile away, was no barrage; the ruddy gleams in the sky came from no Paris defence against aircraft. We were seeing and hearing Polyphemus himself, groping in his blindness to do harm to men, the giant who has replaced in the hearts of civilians the bogy of childhood—the word we only whisper, 'the Front.' This noise we had only heard vaguely before, and those of us who heard it were laughed at by those who heard it not; these lights we had never seen. It meant the long-waited-for offensive, the new attempt of Polyphemus to catch the valiant and undaunted Ulysses.

"*Monday, 15th.*—The cannonade continued even through the sound of the waking birds, the rumble of early market-carts, the first trams, the multiplying taxis. Two yards from the boulevards themselves it could be heard throughout the morning. The two o'clock *communiqué* told us that the offensive had begun: a fact which since midnight we had not doubted, and one which at lunch-time Bertha, breaking silence a little hoarsely after her long sulks, confirmed very definitely. This day was a public holiday, the Fourteenth having fallen on a Sunday. Everybody ate at restaurants in celebration, the weather being on the hot side of perfect. The birds tried three times to go to sleep. Bertha disturbed them twice, so that three times they had to perform their very intricate Bed-time Quadrilles against a saffron sky shot with rose. The third time they broke silence with peevish and indignant cries; they had really stood enough, they said. 'The fish was excellent,' said my host. 'But it fell rather too near that

time!' replied the boy-waiter in a strong Spanish accent, with his mind on Bertha and his heart in Madrid.

"Under the trees soldiers of all nations and all languages once more proved the futility of the Tower of Babel, when it comes to a question of establishing friendly relations with a pretty girl. Tommy has a formula which seems to me admirably explicative, at the expense of learning only five words: 'Boche no bong, voo tray bong.'

"Again no air-raid; the cannonade at the Front lively, but nothing to compare with the tumult of last night.

"*Tuesday, 16th.*—The French have taken a thousand prisoners. The Kaiser must be justly enraged at their impertinence. We all know that every offensive must succeed for at least three days; the offended cannot and must not do anything but retire, fighting valiantly. He will never forget this, and never forgive it; we could not expect it of a man who has said that he will never forgive England her new armies.

"Bertha has but hiccupped; as time goes on she suffers more and more with her breathing. Last night at sunset she dropped an extremely loud remark between a station and a café. She reaped two results: a British officer nearly lost the leave-train back, because the police would not let his taxi through the cordon round the hole, and a lady of tender nerves got a free brandy from a total stranger by tottering into the café and falling over his table in a faint.

"Duval was shot the day after Malvy's trial began, perhaps to encourage Malvy, whose trial, after two preliminary sittings, opened this afternoon. M. Pérès is still reading the report of the Senate.

"*Wednesday, 17th.*—No Bertha. The cannonade

was less insistent last night. Both *communiqués* were good. The report which M. Pérès finished reading ranked as a third good *communiqué*, though M. Malvy cannot have been expected to think so.

"The weather took a hand in the affairs of this world after sunset.

> "'Never till to-night, never till now,
> Did I go through a tempest dropping fire.
> Either there is a civil strife in heaven,
> Or else the world, too saucy with the gods,
> Incenses them to send destruction.'

"As Cicero said: 'Saw you anything more wonderful?'

"A pale cloud overhung the eastern city; it flushed; it throbbed to apricot, to nectarine, to intolerable orange and scarlet. People sitting in eastern windows who, two minutes earlier, could hardly see to read, had to shade the page. A more southerly cloud showed how many shades there are in crimson. The west watched it all, then suddenly flashed into ten thousand scarlet wings. In two minutes an indigo and sepia thickness had come up from the south, and from its heart came violet and silver lightnings. An enormous wind blew down our gasping mouths; open, because we had been living inside a heated copper bell all day. One moment we could not breathe; the next, we held the electric lamp to the mantelpiece, that it might not be blown from its place. 'Man alive!' cried the reader of Chesterton. The woman of the house, who keeps alive the pagan lore of the world, looked for further signs and for news in the morning. The signs were plenty. The lightnings showed that in the thick darkness of the sky were hills, plains, wide seas, palm-trees, and all the travels of the wander-lustful. And, as the woman of the house had expected, news came. And such news!

"*Thursday*, 18*th*.—Tidings of the German offensive were eagerly expected; they came not. Of the French offensive they were plenty. Berlin must find this very thin as a German 'push'—must think that the writer of the *communiqué* has transposed the words 'French' and 'German' throughout. Berlin did not see our skies last night.

"To-day I received a snub whose memory I shall treasure all my life. At the yearly July fair on the Boulevard Sebastopol, an old gentleman who was selling old keys, cracked china, and some nice ivory, having incidentally paid my accent the compliment of taking it for a native, took me gravely to task, at some length, and in the most embarrassing publicity, for having said that the French were doing wonderful things.

" 'Yes,' said he, 'and if they are, it is very largely due to the "miserable little English army" of 1914, and to the new and energetic American army of 1918. We must never say "The French." We are the Allies!'

"Day by day the public temper is changing, as the news goes from good to better.

"*September*.—Clemenceau has sounded an authoritative clarion. His success in ruling the country can be gauged by the frequency with which one hears it said: 'If Clemenceau says victory is in sight, it *is*.' This is the reward of a public man who takes the trouble to avoid making unreliable statements, and does not juggle with the sentiments of the people. All through, Clemenceau has been on the optimistic side of confident; he did not hope or believe we should win; he knew it, or said he did. But he did not feed us with frothy hopes; he was perfectly ready to hit us on the head if we showed symptoms of uppishness. When the Chamber became irrelevant and

uproarious, Clemenceau told it that this war was a serious matter, and that he meant to attend to it to the exclusion of everything else, including the Chamber.

"When, therefore, after reassuring us but keeping us in our places, this impressive Tiger really says, without qualification, that victory is in sight, we immediately feel justified in drawing a deeper breath —unbating it a little, as it were. In his reply to the Assemblies he is equally cheering. 'And this is only the first sprouting of a harvest of unspeakable recompenses, of which the highest will be that of having finally delivered the world from the oppression of an implacable brutality, and by one blow freed for a marvellous development of historic grandeur all the permanent hopes of humanitarian civilisation.'

"Four years ago we considered that we had drunk the cup of anguish to the dregs, learned the meaning of hardship down to the dot on the 'i,' and examined to their depths the misery and the magnificence of war. We thought that we were veterans to whose thirsty lips Victory was holding the sweetest draught.

"Soberly do we drink now from a deeper chalice of joy and hope. Not as a feast, but as a sacrament we eat the bread of victory. For we know now that when we shouted for the Marne we were like schoolboys out of school, who think that the trials and punishment and tears of the schoolroom are the only evils of life, and throw their caps in the air for a half-holiday, oblivious of to-morrow morning. We have learned so much more since then of the nature of Sorrow, of how she can wrap a world in one corner of her mantle, and yet stop to plant another willow in a single heart, that glory and joy seem rather like her younger sisters, and under her authority, and until she gives us leave we hardly dare caress them.

Yet every day the news is good, every day the black line on the newspaper maps moves north and east, every day a word of flutter and desperation renews itself from Germany, every day the unquenchable flame within us asks again, 'Is it time? Is it my hour?' And every day we say, 'Wait! Grow yet a little stronger.'

"Some of this distrust of rejoicing we have learned from Germany's behaviour. It is not seemly that the methods with which that nation used to celebrate the sinking of the *Lusitania* should be the methods chosen by us to express what we feel when the wave of invasion begins to ebb. If the Kaiser and his servitors could see Paris just now he would find the spectacle disconcerting. We ought to look happier and talk more noisily, but we have not the heart. We are at once too happy and too fearful. Like lovers united after many years of unhappiness, France and Victory talk together in low tones, each sure of the other's heart. Like lovers, too, they hold out their hands to the friends who have helped to reunite them. It is as though the whole nation had 'closed its eyes in holy dread.'

"Nothing is happening in Paris. It is like a city created in a dream between sleeping and waking. Newspapers appear covered with print, but after reading them no one knows more than before, save for the columns dedicated to war-news. They talk of high prices, of teaching allied languages, of this, of that, but none of it has any actuality or importance. We are shadows in a shadowy city; our real selves are somewhere up that black line that moves ever northward and eastward."

Nine months of 1918 had passed; in their space we had been plunged into black dread, raised to pinnacles of hope; Berthas and Gothas had done

their best to kill some of us and frighten the rest, and yet the autumn found us with an undaunted face. We were afraid of hope, but we had plumbed the depths of dread, and knew that we were still captains of our souls.

RAIDS ON PARIS

	Projectiles Dropped.	Killed.	Wounded.
Zeppelins and aeroplanes . .	746	266	603
Big gun	303	256	620

Against this apparent equality of damage must be reckoned (*a*) the considerable material damage done by aeroplanes, on the one hand, (*b*) the loss of twenty-four hours of work to the industrial district of Paris on March 23, when, by order, the bombardment being then classed as an air-raid, Big Bertha caused the stoppage of all public transport.

CHAPTER XII

ARMISTICE

UPON this period of resistance, of dawning hope, of sunrise chasing black shadows, broke suddenly the Day. It was not *Der Tag*; it was day in the sense of daylight that makes the shadows flee away. It found us so much armoured in endurance, in the will to endure, as a German philosopher would put it, that for a while we were almost obstinate in resisting the invitation to rejoice. My present impression is that from October onwards a tide of joy flowed upon us; yet, when I consult the impressions of the moment, there is a distinct hanging back, a fear of good news (ah! those days when the Marne seemed to us the banishment of the invader!). From the moment when the defeat of the German, the utter routing of him, became certain, Paris took her place as the centre of the world. But she was not quite sure of herself, as contemporary notes show:

"*October*.—It was very unfortunate that the treacherous autumn weather should choose to break into hopeless drizzle on the very day when Paris was at once celebrating the liberation of Lille and the Loan of Liberation. Nothing could damp the spirits of the crowds who flocked to the Place de la Concorde and the Hôtel de Ville on Sunday, but the day was robbed of its gaiety and colour by the miserable grey skies that hung low over the city. The Place de la Concorde

on the Saturday was a sight never to be forgotten. The whole of its wide stretches of pavement were covered with closely crowded guns of every sort and kind wrested from the Boche. It was almost impossible to believe in their huge numbers, even when they were under the eyes. The array went on up the Champs Élysées. The pavement was everywhere broken up by the weight of the guns, but little did the populace care whether it stubbed its toes or not. We were not thinking about our toes.

"On the terrace of the Tuileries a long line of German aeroplanes put their ugly snouts over the railings and looked down on the crowd like malign animals. One in particular, an enormous thing, painted black, had the air of a very particularly specially devilish devil. The most frequented corner of the square was, of course, that where the statue of Strassburg still mourns and still shows her device: 'Français quand même'; and by her side, resplendent in flags and flowers, the statue of Lille was all day visited by people whose eyes moistened as they looked. Lord Derby's laurel-wreath was conspicuously displayed, and also General Haking's pennant. Against the bronze door of the monument lay a great pile of offerings from private persons, ranging from great bouquets of chrysanthemums or roses to little penny bunches, or rather bunches of the size which used to be a penny! Behind the statue, tall white Venetian masts, outlining the Tuileries terrace, held up to the sky so many Gallic cocks, their proud outlines cut out in dull gold against the grey. A couple who had been married that morning walked through all this, and came to the conclusion that a finer array of wedding presents, or more welcome ones, no bride or bridegroom ever had; and this in spite of a good deal of duplication!

"We are half afraid to be as happy as we are! We do not want to lose our heads with joy, as the Berliners did when the *Lusitania* was sunk, although we have really cause to do so, as Hindenburg would probably admit. We want to be good children, and not get excited, and to get the morning paper earlier, and to kiss Foch, and to get a German into a corner and tell him all we think about him and then kill him. We also cannot quite make out how it is that we seem to be wanting war and peace almost equally. Whether all this is logical or not we do not know, and perhaps we do not greatly care.

"We are reaping more than one benefit by the absence of air-raids. The first is, of course, that there are no air-raids, and that really is such a big one that it obscures all the rest.

"Then it is luxurious to wake in the night and hear a noise and not imagine it to be the first warning shot or the preliminary wail of the sirens. It is also extremely pleasant not to sit by the light of one shrouded lamp wondering which of the many thumps and bumps is bombs and which is barrage, and whether any of them are labelled with your address. And our brightened streets are wonderful to us. Why, there are corners here where you can see the other side of the road!

"The Place de la Concorde is fully lighted, to show up the German guns displayed there on behalf of the Liberation Loan; but that is a special concession, quite apart from the unveiling of the big lamps at street corners. The system followed is that lamps in direct communication with the main pressure, which can be turned out instantaneously from the central station, shall have their blue paint removed. It does make a difference, and renders walking through Paris at night, at any rate through the main

thoroughfares, very little more perilous than the trenches.

"There is a moving queue in the Rue de Rivoli, where all day long hopeful refugees gather, waiting to know whether they can yet go back to their liberated homes. Perhaps one should say to the sites of their liberated homes; there is bitter disappointment waiting for thousands who have for four years cherished the mental picture of their bright kitchens, their stuffy, precious parlours, and all the little objects which association and long possession can make beautiful, however ugly they may be. Standing in the Rue de Rivoli, they are perhaps happier than they will be when they get back and see the rubble-heap the Boche has made of their native place. Above their heads as they wait is a placard with "Lille interdit" on it; but the very prohibition is in itself hopeful. Who needed to be told a month ago that he could not go to Lille?

"A few days ago an enormous square erection of wood appeared outside the Grand Palais in the Champs Élysées. It looked like a big case on a gigantic scale and nobody could conceive what might be inside it. The mystery is now clear. The case has been opened, and within it is a plaster cast for a group. This is M. François Sicard's design for a symbolic group, 'Au Poilu.' The figure of France is seen offering homage to her fighting men, in the person of a soldier clad in puttees, overcoat, and trench helmet. The soldier is finely executed, but there is a motherliness bordering on shapelessness about France. At present the meaning of the group is all we care for, but in the course of time we may regret that our patriotism got the better of our critical faculty. In one arm the female figure carries a very small infant wrapped in a shawl. M. Sicard is a well-known sculptor, a native

of Tours, in whose museum his portrait busts of Anatole France, Clemenceau, and others are permanently displayed.

> "'Austrian armies awfully arrayed,
> Boldly by battery besieged Belgrade,
> And another little war hasn't done 'em any good.'

"Thus do we find in the rhymes of our youth and the lore of the Bing Boys the statement of our feeling about the Austrian demand for peace. I don't know whether London took it quite as Paris did, but I can hardly remember an occasion in the last four years when Paris has been so moved. The afternoon papers came out early, and there was not a pedestrian, nor a chauffeur, nor a passenger in a vehicle, nor a tramway conductor who did not immediately buy one and bury his head in it.

"I watched two men colliding because both of them were reading the news, and, instead of curt apologies or curter remonstrances, all that happened was that they raised their eyes over the top of their respective papers, smiled at each other like lovers, and gently proceeded on their respective ways. Another man who bought his paper at a kiosk on the kerb of the Place de l'Opéra immediately proceeded to cross that maelstrom of traffic, and only caught sight of the news when he had begun that difficult navigation. He stopped dead, and in any ordinary circumstances the word "dead" is particularly applicable to people who stop in the Place de l'Opéra. On this occasion it didn't matter, for, although he was practically leaning on the bonnet of a motor-car the chauffeur himself had just seen the headline on the paper he had bought, and for the first time in history pedestrian and driver would have been on amicable terms if each hadn't been quite oblivious of the other's existence!

"On November 11, at 11 a.m., guns sounded in Paris without hostile intent for the first time in five years.

"It would have been a strange thing if Paris had kept her head when the Armistice was signed, and accordingly she did not. For three days she made holiday; suburban homes were left desolate, shops remained shut, and the population turned itself into the streets, flowed through the restaurants and theatres, and drank champagne till one wondered if the sixty million bottles of Reims had not already been laid under contribution. No one who saw the boulevards on the Sunday when we were waiting for news, the Monday when the Armistice was signed, or the Tuesday when we heard its terms, and the lights went up at dusk along the splendid thoroughfare for the first time in four years, will ever forget the sight. But there was very little to regret in these manifestations; the populace policed itself. There were many, of course, who had had recourse to bottles of every kind by way of expressing their joy, but they were lost among the cheering thousands. The only policeman I saw in those three days was being kissed! Paris policemen have all the authoritative majesty of our own, in the eyes of the public, but they do not enjoy that half-affectionate, teasing regard which is the portion of Bobby. Before one of them could be kissed, and kissed without remonstrance by a great many people too, much must have happened to overset the tradition of the police force and the attitude of the public.

"We are in a state of suspended animation. It seems impossible to attend to the details of domestic daily life. Cooks ask their mistresses for new kitchen aprons, and the mistresses reply, 'I don't believe they'll accept!' Chauffeurs ask for six francs for

a two-franc fare, and are told, 'I think they're bound to knuckle under!' It reminds me of the moments when we have been waiting for big offensives, and ourselves seemed like shadows.

"Future generations will look back and wonder what it was like to be alive in these days. They will picture our sensations, the wild rush of joy, the excitement over the German delegates, and will certainly say that we were privileged to be able to realise the passage of such wonderful hours. And in old age perhaps some of us will be able to believe in this picture. But, as a matter of fact, we are not realising anything of the kind, we are feeling very little; we are more like people caught bare-headed in a hailstorm than a nation bathed in victory. We feel rather dazed and stupid, and read the papers in the morning almost as dully as if they were written in a language we only half understood. Little things dwell in our minds, and we get excited about details.

"For instance, we were seriously anxious about the route the German delegates were to take. The terms they were to accept or refuse mattered a good deal more to us, but what we thought of and talked of was the way they were to come. A horrid rumour ran like wild fire round the town that they were coming by express through Switzerland, and would enter French territory at Pontarlier, famous for absinthe and cheese in peace-time, and for obstinate passport officials in war. This notion offended us deeply. What, these people were to come comfortably by train through peaceful country-sides, with smiling neutrals to help them on their way! We were most indignant. We knew what we wanted, and pictures of old wars had fixed it in our brain that the conquered have only one route to the conqueror, and that is across the battle-field. One or two humble

little people carrying a white flag, stumbling through the slain, to a tent where a pennon on a lance stuck in the ground indicates the presence of the victorious general . . . that was the right thing! Our spirits went up with a bound (although by every law of common sense and human feeling they ought to have been up to the roof already) when we read of the furtive, humiliated expedition across No Man's Land, with a gang of workmen to mend the roads, the cars with the white flags, and the real, traditional, Stevensonian, blindfolding of the delegates when they reached the French lines.

"Another detail has been bothering us. We were desperately afraid that the delegates would reach Foch, accede to his terms, and have an Armistice before the Allies were in Sedan. 'Are they going to get out of their Sedan?' 'It would be too dreadful if they escaped Sedan.' It seemed to the French that not only divine but dramatic justice would be outraged if the Americans were checked in mid-career six miles from Sedan by an Armistice. To hear us talk one would have supposed that we were more frightened of peace than we ever had been of war.

"About the most desperate crime committed by the Paris populace in those three days was the theft of flags. All the shops were sold out of Allied flags, but the demand was by no means satisfied, and those who had not provided themselves beforehand with bunting were not particularly scrupulous as to how they made up for their lack of forethought. People who lived on the ground-floor or the first-floor found it wise to take in their flags at night. In one shop-window, situated under the very eyes of the law, a piteous notice appeared in agitated writing: 'Here, right opposite the police-station, I have had my three flags stolen!'

"An English lady living on the first floor had decorated her balcony with various flags, including a White Ensign. She saw a good many faces turned up to her windows from the street, opened one of them to see the cause, and found herself face to face with a gentleman in British Navy costume, whose countenance was just appearing above the railing of the balcony. 'What are you doing there?' said she. With commendable promptitude he replied: 'First of all, I should *so* much like to shake hands!' This ceremony having been concluded with great goodwill, the owner of the balcony again suggested that the visitor should explain his presence upon it and his method of reaching it. He then stated that one hardly ever saw a White Ensign, and, being a Navy man, he thought he would like to climb up and have a look at it a bit closer. 'And,' he concluded hurriedly, after a glance at one of the prettiest faces in Paris, 'I should so immensely like to shake hands again!' Whether he thought this salutation would cover the extreme lameness of his story is not known; but he finally went away (by the stairs) carrying another ensign which had been lent to him, and strongly recommending the tenants of the flat to look after their flags!

"But if Paris rejoiced without stint until Tuesday, the rest of the week found her sober in temper and inclined to think that nothing's over except the shouting. The first thoughts of everybody went naturally to the glory of the living and the dead.

"But it is already evident that there are more complicated and varied problems to be dealt with than our absorption with feats of armies permitted us to foresee.

"Many of these problems are external, such as those with which the Peace Conference will have to deal.

But others are internal, such as that of the rebuilding of property. The Senate thinks a man should be allowed to rebuild his ruined home or factory anywhere he likes within his own Department. The Chamber considers that he should be forced to rebuild on the spot of the previous establishment. It is obvious that there are difficulties on both sides. A man who had a factory rather far from the railway would naturally like to rebuild near it, even although his competitors on more favoured sites would hardly approve of his deriving this benefit from the war. On the other hand, the owner of a sawmill must feel an injustice if he be forced to erect his mill again alongside what was once a forest and is now nothing but chemically sterilised chalk.

"Meanwhile the trouble is that the difference is causing delay, and the thousands of ruined citizens who are aching with impatience to begin reconstructing their lives and businesses cannot be expected to understand the hesitations of Parliament, or to think kindly of them. However kindly the refugees have been treated, they naturally want to get home, or rather to that spot of ground where home once stood, and to begin, if only in a wooden hut with one saucepan, upon that combination of family and hearthside from which in all ages and countries the fibre of a nation is woven into a national character.

"At the Gare de l'Est every day may be seen arriving parties of released prisoners from Germany. Germany should have fought tooth and nail against the clause of the Armistice which provides for the repatriation of these men. Nobody who has set eyes on these gaunt wrecks will ever forget it; the sight would teach even a pacifist to hate. When I remember the rosy, plump brutes that I saw carrying hay in England in August, enjoying our country-side, our rich fields,

and splendid trees, being well fed and decently treated, and when I think of these half-naked skeletons, turned out on the German roads with a crust to find their way back as best they could, I wonder whether I wouldn't rather have my will on the Kind-to-Germany Party even sooner than on the Hohenzollern brood."

Alsace Day here was not a success, or else it was more than could have been hoped for. The massed troops of the Allies were to have made a procession through Paris, in honour of Alsace Lorraine, but the populace did not wish to be out of it. It was in a special sense France's Day, and France took it to herself to express that. The procession, stifled by surging crowds, broke up under the weight of numbers long before it reached even the Place de la Concorde. For the rest of the day it was inextricably mingled with shouting throngs, above whose heads waved the flags of many countries.

Our own was represented by more flags than our national reserve had ever allowed us to show before. I have not forgotten a small, French-printed, Union Jack (with all the white borders even and regular) tied to a broomstick, being borne down the boulevards on an official occasion, as a concession to the continental taste for flags. On this occasion no such makeshift was allowed. There was a makeshift, it is true, but what a makeshift! Paris is well supplied with Stars and Stripes, not so well with Union Jacks. This did not suit Tommy's notions. The Leave Club did not like it. Urged thereto in the first instance by a gallant soldier of the Empire, a Boer by nationality, a party of soldiers commandeered all the sewing-machines in the Leave Club, and for several evenings, until the small hours, they worked hard to make the four hundred banners, representing the divisions of the Empire, which were

carried from the Arc de Triomphe as far as the crowd would let them. Made of every colour, more or less roughly embroidered, they embodied a spirit which one would like to see commanding the propaganda authorities. One bore the device: "British! Your Allies, 1914–1918." That was carried high through the town, and well it deserved to be.

"If Clemenceau sees us through the forthcoming elections he will be doing to France almost as great a service as he did in bringing her through endurance to victory. There are warring forces at work beneath the surface of that artificial ice which has been frozen over the political lake to give passage to the armies, and, once the elections have begun to melt it, it is to be feared that the country will have to suffer some local and internal troubles. It is the hope of the majority of classes that 'Father Victory' will be able to guide us through them. It is natural to suppose that he must be suffering from the immense reaction of victory, but he has given no sign of it. Many a thought the alert, triumphant old man must give to the wild-hearted young Mayor of Montmartre of '70, and to that young heart's dreams, which, with all their glory of youth, were not one-tenth as wonderful as the dream he has helped to turn into reality in his age.

"I have just said good-bye to two British officers who are on their way to Metz, Strasbourg, and Germany. Five years ago one would have wondered at their choice of such a route for a winter journey. Four years ago Kingdom Come was nearer than Metz. Six days ago all the king's horses and all the king's men, the angel Gabriel, the King of the Tonga Islands, the Archbishop of Canterbury, and all the Presidents of all the Americas, could not have enabled one British soldier in uniform to perform openly the

simple act of putting one foot before the other on the road outside Strasbourg until he should be inside Strasbourg. And to-day, within one little week, here are these two, and thousands of others, turning their faces with one accord to the East, and talking of Metz and Strasbourg as though they were Lyons and Marseilles! It is only by little exterior incidents of this kind that we can persuade ourselves of the huge change that has broken upon us. I have never known what Kipling meant by a line in the chorus of Mandalay; but, however the dawn may come up in China cross the bay, Peace has come up like thunder here."

The King arrived in Paris on a dismal day. From earliest morning a steady, ill-humoured, unremitting rain was falling, and as the hours went on the sky settled more and more determinedly into the sulks. At first one was disappointed; the previous day would have done credit to May at her best, and it seemed too bad that the same magnificent sunshine should not greet the King. But, as it afterwards turned out, the bad weather only succeeded in adding to the triumph of the occasion. People will go out to see a pageant in fine weather because they are bored, or because they like pageants. But in wet weather they stay at home because they do not like to be wet. There was only one conclusion to draw about the King's visit: the Paris crowd wanted to greet him. For hours they stood packed together on pavements, clinging to railings, perched on ledges. The unrelenting heavens drenched them through and through, the ground grew muddier and muddier; but no one went away, and every minute fresh batches of would-be spectators hurried up. The sight around the Arc de Triomphe will never be forgotten by any who saw it. Not another creature could have found space;

the jam was almost terrifying. Yet when the King came by, somehow or other everybody managed to free an arm that it might wave a flag, a handkerchief, or a hat.

Down the hill, away towards the distant Louvre, stretched the triumphal route, lined by the fighting men of France, in their faded blue coats and mediæval-looking trench helmets. The grey mass of Napoleon's arch dominated the scene, and the Obelisk and the Louvre were as vague as dreams, but also grey. Four and a half years ago, on a blazing day that April had borrowed from July, the King and the President drove down this incomparable thoroughfare. Curious and excited crowds thronged to see them, and the road was kept by soldiers—soldiers dressed in long dark blue overcoats, red breeches, and gay little red *képis*. They were the *petits piou-pious* of France. He will be a brave man who tries to tell the story of how the *piou-piou* became the *poilu*, and he must be almost a universal genius if he is to succeed. The visit of the King has naturally revived in us memories of those distant days—as distant they seem as if they applied to Martians, or to the youth of the world, when man, carelessly enjoying Eden, found himself suddenly at grips with an unrelenting Purgatory.

The welcome accorded to the King, both public and private, was as cordial as good-will and warm feeling can make it. The speeches at the Élysée pleased the French very much. Here were two men trying to express the inexpressible to each other before a listening world. They found ways of attempting it which consort perfectly with the accepted ideas of our national characteristics. Poincaré was more eloquent than King George; King George was more bluff than Poincaré—and everybody was pleased. It has been

specially noticed that the King spoke of the dead. He did it shortly, for this was a fête, but he did it with feeling, and the many thousands who gladly joined in welcoming him though their hearts are in mourning, were the first to think this reference to their dead was very much in place.

The young Princes scored a great personal success. Everybody who saw them instantaneously liked them, and the liking seemed to be mutual, if two smiling faces were to be believed. At the Leave Club they were greeted as one supposed they would be. When a thousand Tommies from every part of the Empire all find themselves at one moment impelled to fill their lungs and shout, the noise that follows is considerable. Such an impulse was given at the Leave Club when the Princes arrived in the great concert-hall. The Horse Guards' Band, which was playing, immediately gave up the attempt, as much from expediency as from respect; ten bands could not have been heard. Tommy, with greater friendliness than etiquette, began to voice his wish for a speech, and the Prince of Wales spoke a couple of sentences of thanks and good wishes.

"The royal visit has caused a certain amount of domestic scurry in this city. For the first time in four and a half years invitations to the Élysée bore an injunction that evening dress would be considered indispensable. No dressmaker in Paris can deliver a dress under three weeks just now; they are all too busy. As for men's tailors, they express a willingness to give a first fitting ten days after the order is given, and a second fitting a fortnight after the first!

"The result of the sudden outbreak of ceremonial festivities at the Élysée and the Embassy has been an absolute sweep clean of every ready-made evening dress in the large shops, and the overwhelming of the

cleaning-and-pressing tailors, to say nothing of the stoppeurs, hastily begged to take any money they like if only they will repair a moth-hole in the long unused swallow-tail in time for its owner to appear at the dinner or the reception. And even stoppeurs have proved themselves amenable to the piteous story: 'I've been asked to meet the King of England to-night; oh, CAN'T you do it in time?' *Vivent les braves stoppeurs* who have consented to do so!

"As for the ready-made frocks, they are very pretty, and their new owners know only one dread—that they may meet two or three other ladies, to whom they may not feel the least twin, gowned in replicas of their own! However, gentlemen in stopped coats and ladies in makeshift frocks can all take refuge in the unassailable position that the only people who went in for full dress in war-time were profiteers and neutrals, so that our present sartorial tribulations are highly honourable to us.

"A reception at the Hôtel de Ville gave people a real chance of seeing their royal visitors at close quarters, and a great feature of the crowds lining the streets was the prevalence of the Parisian work-girls, who had gathered in thousands, each armed with a Union Jack, to shout a shrill welcome. The most striking of the official functions was the reception given in honour of His Majesty by Lord Derby at the British Embassy. It was a very curious sensation to see the fine halls of the Embassy again blazing with light, and again filled with a brilliant throng of peace-clad men and women. Every imaginable magnificence of colour and of jewel was there, and all were outshone by the gorgeous robes of Cardinal Amette and Cardinal Bourne. Marshal Foch, in his horizon-blue uniform, paled into insignificance beside them, and Joffre, in a pre-war uniform, was really

only noticeable by the heartiness with which he applauded the conferring of the Order of Merit upon his brother—Marshal Foch. A company which included the President, the King, the Prince of Wales, Prince Albert, two Field-Marshals of France, three or four Ministers, a couple of Cardinals, the Aga Khan, three or four Ambassadors, and the leaders of Paris society, is a thing which we have not seen for many a long year."

A succession of royal visits kept Paris on a wave of excitement, but there was never a moment to compare with the 11th of November; not even when Mr. Wilson arrived. Indeed, that 11th of November came, during the long months of the Conference, to figure in our memories with all the wistful splendour that surrounds in our age the thoughts of our youth.

CHAPTER XIII

PARIS IN 1919. THE MAKING OF PEACE

THE time has not yet come when a satisfactory history of the Peace Conference can be written. It is too vast and complicated a subject, and besides, the work it undertook is by no means finished, and as a body it still exists. And when that history is written, it will fill a shelf with fat volumes, whose very indexing will constitute a formidable work.

On the mind of the public the Conference produced a bad impression. I suppose expectation had run too high; we thought that the Armistice meant the defeat of the Germans, that the defeat of the Germans meant a Conference, and that the Conference would make peace in about a fortnight, and all would immediately be as it was in 1914, save the aching vacancies at every hearth-side. Those must remain, but all the other shadows would flee away. We prepared to welcome the Conference with open arms. Had we kept them open all the time we should have had to have an Aaron each to support them; for indeed it was long a-coming, and longer still a-going. If I have to record that Paris went through months of impatience and discontent, at any rate one must remember that she had excuses. She had passed through the war with a noble dignity which even her profiteers could not defile; but on the morrow of the Armistice there fell upon her that natural reaction which attacks us all after a long spell of endurance and a sudden overwhelming joy. She wanted rest

and ease; and neither was possible. The Conference was heralded by enormous crowds of secretaries and under-secretaries and private secretaries, who filled the hotels, snapped up every furnished flat, hired every car, and, worst of all, put up the price of living. The natural traffic of the city had increased, and military cars which had in war-time dashed through the streets on a limited casualty list were infinitely more dangerous in streets thronged with omnibuses, till then almost entirely absent. Most of the chauffeurs were used to driving at the Front, and would leap a tramway as though it were a shell-hole; a tram itself they nearly always tried to traverse. There was one corner of two streets where I always ignominiously retired into a shop-doorway to reconnoitre before advancing even on to the pavement of the wider thoroughfare.

The Paris streets were a danger; but Paris prices became a constant irritation. We were no longer content to suppose that things were dear because the Army had the first choice; we thought it was our turn. But no; the influx of visitors sent prices soaring into the air, especially as they all paid without a murmur whatever their hotel or restaurant asked. The overcrowding was general; by mid-December I noted that:

"Paris is full of weary wights who forget that there isn't a war on. They come trotting to Paris on leave, or for some special duty in connection with the Peace Conference, and they drive merrily up to an hotel and ask for a room. Then the lady in the glass cage looks sternly at them and says reprovingly that the hotel is full. They repeat the process until their taxi-man says he will leave their luggage in the street sooner than drive them any farther. Then the argument with the hotel people becomes passionate, and

they end up in bathrooms and on sofas. It is said that three lieutenant-generals slept together in a servant's attic of one of the big hotels. Ever since peace broke out these terrible conditions have been getting worse. With a dozen of the big hotels commandeered for Peace delegates, another to house American pressmen, about a hundred thousand extra visitors in Paris, more coming, and the city packed to overflowing, the situation is really serious.

"For the fourth time in five years we are awaiting invasion, and are making all the preparations—I might even say taking all the precautions—which seem to us necessary. It is true that the new invasion is to differ greatly from the others, but we have at certain moments looked forward to it with some sinking of the heart. By the time all the Peace delegates have arrived in this city they will amount to an army of occupation of the most serious dimensions.

"The British alone have taken four hotels. President Wilson, with a restricted staff, is to occupy a palace near the Park Monceau, and where everybody else is going to fit in it is impossible to say. Hotel accommodation is impossible to find even in the smallest, most one-eyed hotels in back streets. It is difficult to house the delegates themselves, and goodness knows where we are to put all the tribes of their followers, for on an occasion of this sort it is a well-known truth that—

> "'Big brass hats have small brass hats
> Upon their backs to bite 'em,
> And bright red tabs have dark green tabs,
> And so *ad infinitum*.'"

Our depression came upon us gradually, and with moments of great exultation. Yet some of these brought their own uneasiness with them. We began to understand, for instance, that there were two kinds

of reaction, one leading to inertia and the other to the wildest excitement. The celebration of that first peace Christmas was eloquent of both.

Dickens would have enjoyed that Christmas in Paris. Bob Cratchit was here, Scrooge at his most after-the-nightmare-I'll-be-dashed-jolly was here, Tiny Tim (not always so very tiny) was here in hospital blue, on crutches, at the Leave Club. As for the goose and other provender, they were here too, and their prices came home behind them like the tails of Bo-Peep's sheep—only longer. The Central Markets on the two mornings before Christmas and on the day itself were eloquent of the fact that, in the quaint fashion of humankind, we proposed expressing our rejoicings in large part through the media of our mouths and our internal economies. Holly was scarce, heather abundant, butter absent, margarine rare, but game and poultry and meat, vegetables, fish and fruit, were there in plenty. Mud, dyed green or red, according to the merchandise of the spot, was even more plentiful than food. The meat market displayed an abundance calculated to make converts to vegetarianism of all who saw it. The usual French crowd was varied by many American soldiers buying for different organisations. It was fortunate that their uniform is popular, because the effect of their presence on the prices was anything but beneficial to the buyers. They come from a country where money is plentiful, and even our prices seem moderate to them, with the result that they cheerfully buy in large quantities without even asking how much they must pay, and the sellers save their goods in the hope that "les américains" will come along and make purchase in this lordly style.

However, let us not forget to be thankful for mercies vouchsafed to us. Lemons were cheap! They have

been sevenpence-halfpenny each, but on Christmas Eve small ones could be bought for a penny each. I admit that on lemons alone it is difficult to feel thoroughly festive, and that all the more ordinary ingredients of festivity were too expensive to be bought; but still it was nice to know, when refusing to pay a sovereign for a small pheasant, that one really did own ten lemons that had only cost a franc, and could even be seen smiling (a little sourly) through the meshes of the domestic string-bag.

The police sternly refused to allow the revival of the pre-war Réveillon, or supper after Midnight Mass, on Christmas Eve. Nevertheless, a good substitute was provided at some restaurants, by the simple expedient of cutting out the Mass and beginning the revelry earlier. I dined at a famous restaurant, which showed that it was glad about the Peace by charging a hundred francs a head for dinner without wine. The menu was certainly magnificent, but no human being could eat it all, so while it fulfilled what one might expect of a meal that cost four pounds a head, it also suited the management, which must have reaped a rich harvest of uneaten meats. It began with oysters and oxtail soup, went on, as well as I remember the long succession of dishes, to lobster, venison, chicken, and grilled black and white puddings, and ended up with cream cake and ice. I believe there was a salad, and there may have been other things too, but one could only regard with dazed wonder the spectacle of so much to eat and so much to pay.

Evening dress was the rule; boiled shirts and white ties show up in all their native comicality when seen thus after four years. Who in the world invented them? Did Puck and Aubrey Beardsley combine in some past moment among the clouds to invent the

costume? As for the women, they mostly wore black, so far as they wore anything; but the observer could gather that sleeves were considered indecent. At least, no lady who values her lack of reputation would so far forget herself as to wear any.

After dinner great sticks of coloured flowers were handed to the women, trumpets to the men. A famous singer stood on a table and waved a cotton tricolour, and sang the "Marseillaise" in a golden voice marred by the thick haze of tobacco. An orchestra of three performers (the first heard in a Paris restaurant for four years) made its way with much application through a great many National Anthems. Ours was played before the American, a detail which gave pleasure to the British and no offence to the Americans. The latter, by the way, seem to know only the first two lines of the words of "The Star-spangled Banner." Then dancing began; and quite suddenly the people who did not want to dance wanted very badly to go home to their quiet fireside and see Christmas in for themselves. It is a sad discovery that you have become elderly without noticing it. It may wear off, it may be merely the effect of too much to eat in too hot an atmosphere; I like to think it is so, and I propose cherishing the belief by not risking a disillusion on any similar occasion.

I have described the scene in full because it had such a fantastic air of unreality, and yet called upon one's memory of 1913 to witness that it was perfectly normal. Its relation to the birth of a Baby, its connection with victory won on blood-soaked fields, was far to seek. Yet I remember that even thus did people "rejoice" in the days when, having had no cause for mourning, they did not know what rejoicing was. It is odd to find them doing it in the same way now. What is all this queer pageant of things to eat

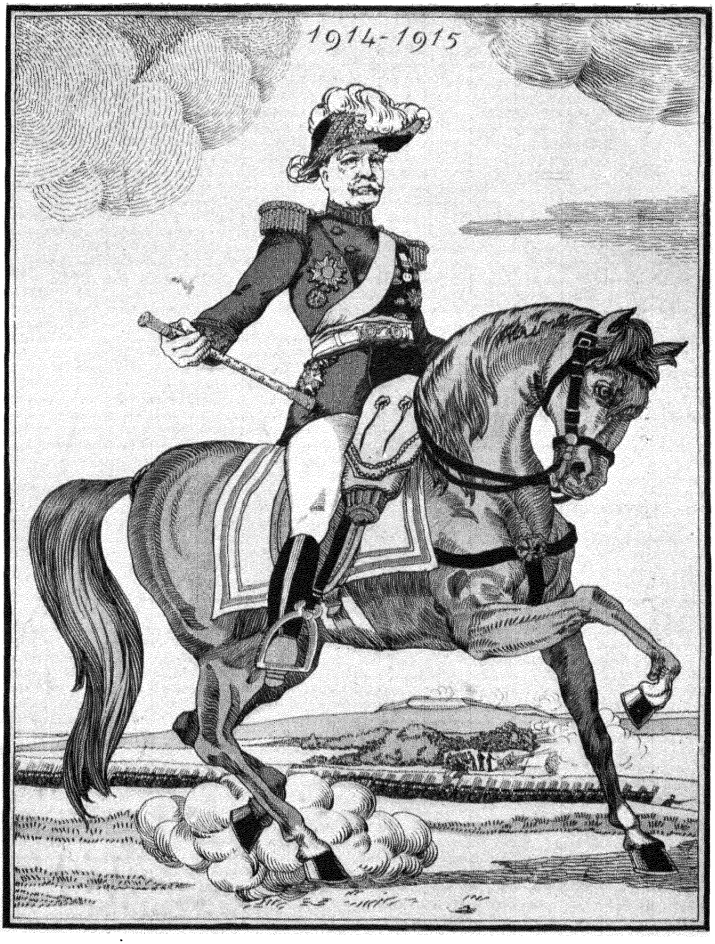
and drink, of men with stiff shirt-fronts and women with topless frocks and strings of glittering bits of carbonised coal? On Christmas Eve it looked to the unaccustomed eye like the revels of the lower regions in *Armide*, or the labours of the dwarfs in Niflheim. Yet we were paying a hundred francs a head to do it, instead of drawing a salary! It was rather a depressing sight (but that may have been the pudding after the ice after the chicken after the black pudding after the venison after the lobster after the soup after the oysters).

It is certain that this kind of revelry will become more and more popular. History has always shown that times of extreme poverty and destitution among one set of classes synchronise with much wealth and insane expenditure in another. I am afraid that for the next year or two Paris will not be the model of a town where amusements hold their proper place in relation to the serious matters of life. The Parisians, of course, will continue to do as they did before the war; they will go to bed in order to prepare for a hard day's work just when the tourist is getting up to prepare for a hard night's pleasure. The authorities show every sign of being reluctant to remove restrictions on night revelry. People have an appetite for rioting after the long period of abstinence. And if men who have been in the trenches in Flanders and Gallipoli, and have meanwhile lost their livelihood at home, fling themselves into the atmosphere of chypre and restaurants, where meals that cost four pounds, and dances that probably cost a good deal more, are the rule, what are we to expect when the Argentine and Brazilian profiteer gets permission to come to Paris? This is perhaps not one of the most serious problems of peace, but it still exists, and for those who live in Paris it has an

importance little short of deadly. That kind of life puts up the standard of morals. International society in a big capital has always been an unsatisfactory affair. Only the carbolic acid of politics can sanitise the ordinary cosmopolitan existence of such a place as Paris. Not everybody cares for politics. Well, then, of course off you go to buy the frock that cost the cash that came from the guns and dance in the house the war built.

I have a word of advice to the women of England based on what I have seen of fashions here since November 11; most earnestly I tender it to them. Don't on any account wear gloves in the evening; somebody might take you for a lady.

If the Germans in Alsace-Lorraine had cherished any hopes that those provinces hankered after German nationality they must have been sadly undeceived on the day when the civil authorities of France entered Metz and Strasbourg. The military entries were accompanied by all the fascination which armies exert over the minds of the people. The heavy rolling of the guns, rhythmic footfalls of infantry, clap-clattering of cavalry, wind-borne bursts of martial music, the pageantry of uniform, standards, medals and ribbons, exert a great effect on that curious form of epidemic which is known as the spirit of crowds. Unless you ardently hate an army you can hardly avoid being enthusiastic about its entry into a town conquered by long-drawn heroism. With civil processions the case is different, particularly in the case of republics. A President and Prime Minister in civilian clothes stir the sense of symbolism, of personal loyalty, in no sense as actively as do a King and Princes. Therefore, when Poincaré and Clemenceau were hailed as deliverers by a half-frenzied crowd, massed between houses of which nine out of ten, if



MARSHAL JOFFRE.

Édité par l'Edition de France, 99 Boulevard Raspail, Paris.

not more, were hung with bunting, it is no wonder that Poincaré was moved to cry, "Le Plébiscite est fait!"

The welcome in Strasbourg was much more tumultuous than in Metz. Certain sceptics tried to draw a political moral from the comparative quiet of Metz. The public heeded them not. Strasbourg is on the very edge of Germany, Metz is much nearer to France. If either city was to be won over to German thought and German rule it must inevitably have been Strasbourg, seated on the Rhine itself. The reasons for the more explicit rejoicings in Strasbourg are various and sufficient. The Lorrainer is a much quieter person than the Alsatian. He belongs racially to the same type as that of the Eastern Frenchman. He is an industrial, lives among mines, is careful of his money, and reserved in his feelings. The Alsatian belongs much more to the type of the Southern German, that German whose *Gemüthlichkeit* was a proud boast; the German of the Black Forest, of the Christmas-tree and the Christ-Child, the German of the Nuremberg toys and the fairy-tales of Grimm —that is, a German whom Prussian militarism and world-envy have all but swept from the map. Only in Alsace, where French rule has cultivated liberty and the gentler longings of the soul, are these genial qualities allowed to flourish. If the Alsatian is no more enchanted to belong once more to France than is the Lorrainer, he has by heredity and training greater aptitude in expressing his joy.

It appears that at any rate there can be no doubt, even in the mind of the most hardened political sceptic and mischief-maker, that the minds of the children of the recovered provinces turn by nature towards France. The efforts they are making to learn the tongue which till November 11 it brought a bout of prison to be heard speaking are sometimes

funny and always pathetic. In the streets of the towns one comes constantly upon little groups of children most solemnly repeating French phrases learned from some superior professor, aged nine or ten, whose parents have since his birth taught him in secret the gracious labials of their lost motherland. "Dé-pêchez-vous! Ça se dit comme ça." And the class laboriously replies: "Té-bêchez-fous!"

We were still so bewildered by the greatness of what had befallen us that we were perhaps better pleased with little things than with big.

It was with a distinct thrill that we discovered one morning news about the weather in all the papers! It had been suppressed for so long, in the interests of the Allied "Doras," and, to tell the truth, we had not missed it very much. But when we found ourselves allowed to know once again that it was a wet morning, by means other than looking out of the window, we realised that the Boche was no longer trying to send gas over us, or bombs, or Bertha shells. We could take this in better than more important things.

"In December President Wilson arrived, and Paris greeted him as seldom man was greeted before. Just as his co-operation in the war after three weary years of our indomitable struggle had stood to the French for a shortened war, so his arrival here stood to them for an early peace. One of the first things he saw at St. Nazaire was a huge banner calling him "the benefactor of mankind," and Paris was not behind the French port in welcoming him; indeed she "laid herself so completely at his feet" that he must have begun to wonder if, after all, it was not the American troops that got to Mons in 1914. It is not in all respects satisfactory to see the blue-clad veteran of Verdun acclaiming with the whole of his generous soul Ameri-

can Red Cross and Y.M.C.A. men who have spent most of their time since their arrival in France in Paris, or Orleans, or St. Nazaire. This is not an aspersion upon the workers in question, who have done everything in their power to further the thing for which they came here, and would have behaved, had they been sent anywhere near the Front, as many of their colleagues in the same magnificent services have done; that is to say, with complete fearlessness, or rather complete mastery of fear. At the same time the fact remains that a very large proportion of the two million and odd Americans here have not been in France very long, and have not spent much, if any, time in the front line. It is difficult to say this without seeming grudging, which is the last thing one wants to do. One wants Cæsar to have his own, and more than his own; but now and then watching the attitude of France, with the Americans in her midst, one is tempted to wonder if they are not rendering unto him not only what belongs to him, but a good deal of what is God's also.

"Hysteria is not at all a good foundation for an international union, which is going to have far too much to do to be able to sit about waiting for things and singing that each other is a jolly good fellow. In addition to the vital nature of the work which lies ahead, we have to remember the necessity of doing it as quickly as possible. Mistakes made now will be more deadly than any that have ever been made in the troublous councils of mankind.

"President Wilson has the biggest chance history has ever offered to a single being. Alexander the Great's was a baby to it. The chance is double-edged, however, for it is a chance to remake a world or to come a most unholy cropper. It remains to be seen whether popular adulation can turn a head so long—one might say

so inordinately long—as that of President Wilson. He has been forty-eight hours in Paris, and every solitary thing he has done has been acclaimed as so wonderful that a misquotation goes running in the head:

> " 'There are nine-and-sixty ways of passing Wilson's days,
> And-every-single-one-of-them-is-right.'

"When he smiles he is right, when he is grave he is right, when he goes to church he is right, when he comes out of church he is right. When he drives publicly he is righter than ever, and if he drives privately you would think he had invented that method of transport. One newspaper went so far as to praise the fact that the church service he attended was the normal church service of the place he selected. All this is very genial, and shows a sense of gratitude in the French which they have not always expressed. The one point is, that, jolly as it is, is it very good for President Wilson, and is it, therefore, very good for us? He is not here on a joy-ride, as he was the first person to point out. He is here for work, and work is best done in an atmosphere well removed from that of cheering crowds and unstinted praise.

"The Socialists have been putting up a valiant attempt to nobble the President. Before he arrived in France they kicked up such a hullabaloo, saying his fourteen points were their fourteen points, his people were their people, and his lodging was to be their lodging (but they weren't invited to stay at the Hôtel Murat, so that fell through), that one was quite dazed. If the Socialists had been as pleased with Mr. Wilson when he was too proud to fight and they were too patriotic to defend their country, one could have understood better their present mad enthusiasm for the man who, it would seem, has won the

war. Their present fervour cannot be accounted for in any way save that it must be an attempt to fold him up and put him in their pockets."

Paris, being already full, continued to get fuller. Where everybody contrived to stow themselves is a mystery still, especially those of continental nations, who practise formality in entertaining. Many a time did the telephone ring at midnight or later in easy-going British homes to convey the news that So-and-So and a friend had arrived by the night-train from England, could find not so much as a sofa in any hotel, and might they come and have a cushion on the floor? In my own flat I have had as many as seven strayed wanderers on one night, till the place looked like a casualty clearing-station. Prices continued to go up, under these conditions, and "crises" to increase. Butter vanished, sugar also, from all private households, but in the hotels and restaurants they were plentiful. Matches and tobacco were hardly to be found save in the same privileged places, where they fetched prices which hardly did credit to the good sense of those who paid them—five francs for a packet of ten "Three Castles," for instance, and a tip to the waiter as well!

Weeks passed, and the Conference was still assembling, and that was about all that happened. The pause was long and cheerless, and the Socialists thought they might as well enliven it with a few squibs. They attacked the Government on its Russian policy.

It would be difficult, and perhaps not very useful, to follow in and out of its meanderings that debate, which ended in an all-night sitting. One thing could be counted on throughout, and did not fail us—the fact that the Socialists took every opportunity of making as much ado as they could about nothing. These gentlemen seemed to see their part in national

affairs as though it were that of those servants in Laputa who carried blown bladders containing dried peas fastened like flails to short sticks, and with them "beat upon the mouth of him who is to speak and the right ear of him or them to whom the speaker addressed himself," to attract their attention from their abstruse reflections. And indeed Clemenceau, like Gulliver, might say, "I made signs as well as I could that I had no occasion for such an instrument, which, as I afterwards found, gave [everybody] a very mean opinion of my understanding." Not that the Socialists suppose the other deputies to be lost in abstruse calculations and reflections; but they seem to think that pea-filled bladders are necessary before anybody not a Socialist can be satisfactorily roused to consider the more pressing problems of human existence. It was many hours before they could rouse M. Clemenceau to speech. They tried to irritate him into a rejoinder both in the afternoon and the evening. Instead they got M. Stephen Pichon in one of his most thorough moods, which did not prevent him from being more vigorous than usual, and M. Franklin-Bouillon, who, while attacking the Government as heartily as though he had been a Socialist, demanded all the things against which the Socialists are pledged to fight.

Now all this was very jolly for the Socialists. They could howl at Pichon and the Government together, and they could howl at Franklin-Bouillon and the Government simultaneously. There was an interlude of Briand, who discussed Syria with Cachin in a duologue a great deal more amusing than most of those staged in music-halls.

But with all these ins and outs and ups and downs, and shoutings and tumults, it was only at a late hour in the evening that the Tiger consented to roar. His

roaring was not exactly in the key most welcome to those who had wished to provoke it. He said he wouldn't be bullied; he said in effect that he would do what he liked, and that doing what he liked had brought the country through to victory and earned him the confidence of the majority. He said—but have not his sayings already been written in the chronicles of the daily press? His view of the danger attending the vote of confidence may be gathered by the fact that before the vote had been counted he, as is his habit, left the Chamber and went home to bed. His majority (nearly 300) sent him to the Peace Conference in armour of doubled strength.

January saw Paris becoming more and more impatient, for the Conference put its finger on its lip and behaved exactly like a stage conspirator. After all our hopes of reasonable and open activity with a beaten enemy in the middle distance, we suddenly became involved in an atmosphere of the most futile and exaggerated privacy. Most of this was seriocomic, until the Conference actually proposed that nothing of its deliberations should be known save by *communiqués* prepared and issued by itself, and that anybody who tried to know more than that should be at once beheaded on Tower Hill, or words to that effect! In the general disappointment and exasperation, even the renewal of the Armistice went almost unnoticed. I noted this mood under various days in January, and if the impressions seem dejected, they did nothing but reflect the general mood, and that rather moderately.

"At last we know who are to be the Allied delegates at the preliminary Peace Conference. We had guessed fairly accurately before the announcement was made, but were getting irritated at not being told. If there is one thing more exasperating to the

human spirit than being visibly excluded from a secret that is a secret it is being visibly excluded from a secret that is none at all. 'No More Secret Diplomacy' rings in our ears like the title of an old-fashioned song, in face of the secrecy being observed in high places, and all the precautions being taken at the various hotels requisitioned by Allied Governments for their super-abundant staffs. Bill Sikes could get into the Astor House on the Embankment more easily than an honest citizen can now get into one of these establishments. Nobody but a spy could have the requisite knowledge to penetrate the sacred recesses of the C——, or the M——, or the X——, or the Pour-quoi-Pas.

"When I have been travelling to England or to France in the last four years it has frequently occurred to me that if I had been a really well-trained spy I should have found means to hide some of the more intimate facts of my life, such as my age and my mother's maiden name and the address of the house where I sleep and wash myself, from the searching inquiries of a number of people in whom I had no interest, and who most obviously lost interest in me from the very instant that they perceived that I was what is insultingly known as a worthy person. It now occurs to me equally strongly that if I were a first-class Secret Agent I might dare to call on an old friend's daughter at the L——, or the E——, or the Y——, or the N'en Parle Pas. But, being a plain citizen, I dare not. I have heard too many stories of lynx-eyed detectives waiting to tell Lloyd George that it's no use looking like Lloyd George, they know better: of photographs wanted by the dozen, or thumb-prints, or signatures written in one's own blood, or searching inquiries as to whether there really is a mole under one's left shoulder-blade.

From all these requisitioned hotels the ordinary citizen will most carefully stay away, because as a rule people who think you may be a spy, and take a lot of trouble to prove you are, and then find you aren't, are so disgusted and disappointed with you that they show no signs of being pleased with your probity. Now, if you'd turned out to be Bernstorff they'd have simply beamed.

"Our conversation bristles just now with detectives and precautions and Chubb locks and secret documents and searched waste-paper baskets and fingers on lips. The *New York Herald* says at frequent intervals that the States would like public diplomacy, and we all say, 'Why, yes, we've agreed to that long ago!' and then, throwing our cloaks across our shoulders, pulling our hats about our brows, we whisper hoarsely: 'But, hist! We are observed!' Through every conversation dealing with the Peace Conference, no matter what our nationality, runs this beautiful Adelphi note of melodrama, 'threading it with colour, like yew-berries the yew.' In the old days of secret diplomacy we never talked like this; we left it to the realm of sensational drama. Now we are puzzled to know how it all fits in with the new Public Diplomacy; we are rather wondering whether the much-vaunted publicity is to be kept a secret from all save the delegates.

"The Press has triumphed, and is to be represented at all public meetings of the Conference, but there was a moment when every journalist was up in arms. Certainly there was nothing encouraging in the specimens submitted to the public of the official *communiqués* to which the Conference wished to limit the publicity of its sittings. From every part of the world journalists have come to Paris with the wish to give an honest account of what is going on in that Assembly

which is to settle the fate of civilisation. They realise, of course, and much more vividly than does the ordinary public, that the Conference cannot be held in the market-place, that reserves are necessary, and that the right moment for publishing a fact may not be the most convenient one. They want to be of use, and there is no set of men in the world which includes a greater majority of workers whose guiding principle is loyalty.

"At the beginning of the war the military attitude towards journalists was pretty much the military attitude towards spies. One journalist who spoke to an officer of his intention to enlist received the discouraging reply: 'Oh, we don't want any journalists, thanks.' There followed the depressing period of official Eye-witnesses. In the end, soldiers and civilians alike demanded that journalists should be allowed to tell the public what was going on at the Front. This they did, and if anybody made a rumpus about the occasionally disconcerting vagaries of the Censorship, it was rather politicians at home than the band of hard-working, fearless, loyal war-correspondents who had to share a soldier's risks and be laughed at as *embusqués*, to work eighteen and nineteen hours a day, to travel in conditions of extreme discomfort, to submit to a great many aggravating regulations which they recognised were duly made in a precautionary spirit. The Allied Press has done a great work for the Allies, and has done it in spite of hostility that occasionally verged on scorn, but has now merged into respect.

"Naturally there was bound to be trouble when the diplomatic attitude towards the Press at the Peace Conference threatened to copy in every detail the military attitude of 1914. The attitude of the public can be gauged by the storm of indignation which has

swept over the countries concerned since the decree was published confining the Conference news to an official *communiqué.* The *communiqués* we have seen were dry morsels: 'To-day we talked about Russia'; 'This afternoon we talked about procedure'; but not a word as to the general tenor of that talk.

"The Conference, it is believed, adopted the now abandoned decree in a fit of irritation at the indiscretions of the *New York Tribune* and *l'Humanité.* Both these 'indiscretions' bear a startling likeness to deliberate mischief-making; and mischief-makers are much more likely to thrive under a policy of secrecy than under a controlled publicity. Even if *l'Humanité* has been seized with a sudden admiration for the British Government, and wishes to say so, its headline, 'Le Désaccord Franco-Anglais,' must be consciously mischievous. Even if the *New York Tribune* believes that Wilson said if he didn't get his way all American troops would be withdrawn from Europe, it believes a thing which the smallest investigation would have shown to be false. These two instances, on which the Conference, in a fit of natural but regrettable exasperation, based its decree of privacy, are admirable examples of what happens when people think they are being kept in the dark. They fall a prey to the nearest mischief-monger, the nearest rumour-maker. (Do you remember the week-end in 1914 when London believed that those of the Black Watch who hadn't been killed were those who ran the fastest? I believe myself to be many miles from the Black Watch, or I would not mention that priceless specimen of rumour even now.)

"There is not a loafer in a public-house, a tramp under a hedge, who is not personally and vitally concerned in the decisions of this Conference. Neither the loafer nor the tramp supposes that he has a right

to know word for word who said what at any particular meeting; but every one of us has a right to know the whither and whether of things; the Press is the instrument for communicating that information; it is an instrument which can be turned to the highest possible uses, and wishes to devote itself to them. A League of Nations whose first act is to lay its finger on its lip, and say: 'No journalists, thank you,' is a League which is proposing to build a house without a staircase.

"Clemenceau as anti-journalist is one of our minor surprises. In 1914 his own newspaper was definitely suspended for criticising the Government on the conduct of the war. He must remember very well that the only useful purpose served by that suppression was to give the world a laugh when *l'Homme Libre* became in a day *l'Homme Enchâiné*. There are some things, other than stains, which a goose like Fatima will discover appearing in one place when they have been rubbed out of another. Truth is one of them, but under this treatment room is given for Envy, Hatred, and the rest of that brood to steal her clothes and masquerade for a moment in her character. That is dangerous.

"This preliminary skirmish with the Press has ended in a signal defeat for the diplomatists of the Conference. This is perhaps wholesome; it cannot be bad for the delegates to realise that, while they have a task in which they will be aided by the whole-souled support of their countries, they are not delegates by Divine Right, and must not depart from the public spirit that has sent them to Paris. We are all pro-Conference, but this direct attack upon the right of the public to be taken into as close a confidence with the Conference as is possible produced an explosion of wrath here and in Britain, while the United States

simply drew back their lips and snarled. And no wonder.

"The row resulted in an official decision that a certain number of journalists might be present at the opening session of the Conference long enough to hear M. Poincaré, but that after that most of them must retire. The result might have been foreseen; they did not retire, and, no sufficient force of chuckers-out being available, the press of the world was enabled to hear Lloyd George and Clemenceau being pleased with each other. If this is an official secret, it is one of the many official secrets which are better told than kept. It is sad to think how many yellowing documents in official chambers still keep to themselves items of news which it would have been to the benefit of humanity to have learned this many a year.

"Well, it is over now, and perhaps it will serve as an illustration of the powers of the delegates. It is worth attending to as an instance of the way in which the defects of human temper can lead astray human reason. In this case temper was met by temper, and the net result is the triumph of reason. But it has made us weak, unhappy, and nervy. The Press Committee elected to deal with the matter sat for nine hours, finishing at two in the morning. All its members were busy men, who had previously done a long day's work, and had to begin an even harder one in six or seven hours. We hope this is not a specimen of the pace to be expected from the Conference, which will have plenty to do without retarding matters by raising contentious details.

"The whole world meanwhile is for the man in the street the French Foreign Office, on which pours a light fiercer than ever beat upon a throne. Beyond it in the shadows are Serbia and Poland, and Britain

and the States, and Japan, and even France and Germany; though nobody deigns to talk about them. If you ever met a man whose name ends in 'itch,' you are madly interested in Yugo-Slavs, and if you ever met a man whose name ends in 'sczxski' you consider Poland the destined Bethlehem of future liberty; and all the time your own name may be Brown or Lebrun. It's odd. It is even what a philosopher, courageous enough to say exactly what he meant, considered life to be: 'An 'ell of a mix-up.' On the eleventh of November last, ten weeks ago, I do not believe that Foch was absent from our thoughts for ten minutes together. To-day we know he is busy extending the Armistice and imposing new conditions, and that, if she knows her duty, the cook is preparing luncheon. But we are so busy with the Conference and what it will or will not do, and what it should or should not do, and when and how we can reasonably suppose that it will conclude doing it, that we are content to leave the Armistice to Foch and to go on our way speculating. And yet to-day is a little eleventh of November; we all hug to ourselves the thought of Germans striding over the wet platform under the guidance of an extremely stiff and dignified officer, being ushered into Foch's special train, and there being made to agree that we must have more and more guarantees. Why do we not turn our thoughts from the worries about the Adriatic, and recapture for the moment, in some non-political-brain cell, a little of the aching rapture of November 11, which we could hardly tell from agony —save that we would not have forgone one instant of it? The Adriatic! I would like it to be at the bottom of the sea. In the circumstances, I do not see how it could get there, but I am sure it would be good for it. And yet, while nations wrangle across

her waters, and those who have lost all are confronted by those who want much, we still look on her as a refuge to which we fain would fly from these turmoils."

At last the Conference was gathered in Paris, and at long last it condescended to meet.

The opening session at the Foreign Office was historic. I should hate to be the only person who had not said so; it might look like swank. Having said it, we can get on to the less obvious fact that it was encouraging. Of course delegates were not likely to get into a rage with each other at the opening sitting, if ever, and naturally the proceedings were confined to scratching each other's backs. Nevertheless, these amiable formalities were performed with a goodwill that promised well. Everybody was appallingly solemn at the first, which is not surprising when you remember that the horseshoe table accommodated seventy Hamlets, each as sure as the Prince of Denmark that the world is out of joint, but not in every case convinced that they individually were born to set it right. A loud noise of trumpets from without illustrated with a touch of irony Mr. Wilson's statement that militarism was over and done with. However, it was all right, because it was only a civilian President being saluted, and very tactfully nobody beat a drum. M. Poincaré said he would leave this Conference to its deliberations and left it, probably thanking whatever gods atheistic France allows its Presidents that he was not one of the journalists who had to stay and listen to them.

The meeting took place in a large room full of gilding, whose turgid magnificence had an extremely depressing effect on the spectators. Those who did not belong to the number of the delegates and their secretaries were placed in alcoves, behind tables; of

course they climbed both over and under the tables, which were supposed to be for the use of journalists, but soon turned into grand stands. Subsequently the meetings were moved to another room which was more convenient; but, to tell the truth, the Conference did not run to plenary sessions. It seemed to dislike them, and those it held in six months could be counted on the fingers of one hand. This was natural to anybody who stopped to think, but the crowd does not stop to think, and Paris became gloomier than I have known her at any moment of the war. Theatres and restaurants were crowded, mostly with Peace delegates and their friends, but Paris herself stayed at home and sulked because she could not understand why everybody seemed to have forgotten that we had beaten the Germans.

"Barrie has explained that when the baby laughed for the first time the laugh broke up into millions of pieces and they all went skipping about, and that that was the beginning of fairies. It is a form of propagation which is admirable if the thing propagated is desirable. But if it were to be said that when the first Conference met for the first time it broke up into dozens of Committees and they all went skipping about, and that that was the beginning of Dilly-Dallies, there might be cause for ruefulness in the announcement. Why, here we have a Conference come from every quarter of the globe to settle together in Paris what peace we are to make with the Germans, and how we are to be secure that it shall remain unbroken. No sooner do the delegates meet than they send people flying to the very places they have just come from to go and confer there on what peace we are to make and how we are to secure it! Meanwhile, it seems that the main Conference is going to sit once a week, like a conscientious Vestry Board. If it con-

tinues to breed Committees, missions, commissions, and perhaps even omissions, at its present rate, the French will have to leave Paris and build a capital elsewhere, where they can get on with the normal life of France.

"One day, when, after a thousand and one Saturday Sessions, the present delegates have been thinned by old age, and young and revolutionary blood is beginning to step in, there will be a bomb in the Salle de l'Horloge: some hardy youngster will get up and say that what they are there for is to make peace with Germany! And the eldest surviving delegates will say: 'Germany? Oh, yes, I remember; but, my dear lad, it's very bad form to mention her until you have mentioned the Yugo-Slavs, the Czecho-Slovaks, the Slovenes, the Poles, Posnania, and that Greater Liberia which our labours of the last decades have succeeded in establishing.'

"I may be, and I hope I am, expending all this impatience and irritation for nothing, because the Conference is now sitting, and it may be deciding to make peace, to go on making peace, and to let nothing and nobody stop it making peace, to paraphrase Clemenceau's programme in regard to war. It really is to be most seriously hoped. Because my impatience and irritation are those of the ordinary spectator of affairs; the person who can't get his business going, or can't run her house, because of the manifold material difficulties of life in peace-time as at present existent, and who has brought out of the war, whether combatant or civilian, a lively desire to see the German Gulliver properly bound by thousands of cords, and a lively desire to return to the decent and laborious life of the decent and laborious Lilliputian. We want that Conference to get on with the peace. When it came here we welcomed it with

hearty good feeling, although it did put up the price of butter; but who's going to worry about that, when it's here to bring the dawn like thunder out of Berlin 'crost the way? We do without butter, and we sit down and wait for dawn. And we get committees, special missions, weekly meetings, and a regard as tender as it is passionate on the part of that Conference for nationalities we've never heard of, can't pronounce, don't understand, and must apparently make way for!

"I suppose every delegate to this Conference sees a great many people every day. They are either other delegates, or secretaries of himself or other delegates, or members of commissions, committees, or missions elected by himself and the other delegates; or politicians of his own or some other country represented by himself or other delegates; or highly placed, highly educated, highly successful experts on various subjects to be dealt with by him and the other delegates; or the wives of these people, to whom he and the other delegates must necessarily be civil if they are sufficiently tactless to give anything so social as a mixed entertainment. In all these cases there is a serious amount of delegatitis.

"I wonder, do all the delegates see over the hedge? Do they see that, besides their own world of this moment, which they naturally consider to be the only world that matters, there exists an enormous mass of people who have never met even the valet of a secretary of a member of a Committee appointed by delegates; who are so sunk in ignorance that they don't even want to? There was something not wholly laughable about the four tailors of Tooley Street, when they began their petition with: 'We, the people of England.' They represented something which we to-day represent here in Paris—and unfor-

tunately we represent it in a state of impatience and irritation. We, the milk-women, the butchers, the tailors, the uninformed, the laborious, the grocers, or the dustmen of France—we want to hear that Conference get to work, and we want to hear it getting to work on Germany.

"I—and I naturally mean by myself a particularly broad-minded, cultivated, and interesting member of the educated public—do not confound myself with this 'we.' *I* know—at least, if trying to be a good and courteous listener for long periods at a stretch can inform me, I know—that the Yugo-Slavs really must be attended to, and all the others too, and why. *I* know at least seventy reasons, given me by friends, acquaintances, six morning and three evening papers, why Germany can wait. But then, I'm not the milk-woman; and yet, I do wonder if she is not right? Can you expect a French milk-woman who can't get enough milk to serve all her clients to stop to consider why Italy doesn't want Serbia to have an Adriatic port? Is there, on the other hand, any hope of persuading seventy delegates that they ought to try to understand why that milk-woman can't understand—why she would even be a traitress to her kind if she stopped to understand? I do wonder if the delegates and their satellites realise what huge masses of people there are who see this Armistice whole and see it plain, as a perfectly simple proposition: We fought Germany; we beat Germany; now, for God's sake, make peace, and let us get to work! *C'est la première paix qui coûte.*

"Can it be really true, I am wondering, that only when his person is menaced, that ridiculous mass of nerves and muscles and flesh and blood which makes a man's body, his soul can really shake off its fetters and rise superior to suffering and misery and danger?

Can it be true that we can dedicate to an abstraction like Faith or Love of Country the life by which we retain consciousness of this world we hold so dear, and yet, when danger to that life is over, cannot even keep our temper when a man with a yellower skin than our own wants a volcanic outbreak of earth set in a distant sea? Is it possible that the patient coral-insect might despise such curiously petulant gods as we, who fight an enemy in Central Europe, and then blackguard each other like fish-wives over some coloured rag to be hoisted on a pole in some place where men dive for pearls and eat fish and don't care a cent what we wonderful whites get up to? This Peace Conference ought to have met in the very middle of its Marshalls or its Carolines; somewhere so remote that the late M. Dufayel's hundred and thirty telephone-boxes would have been of no use to anybody. Confound telephones, and all their ilk, and their cousins down to the last degree of bad telegraph or postal service! What good do they do? They tell the ordinary citizen what a silly thing it is to put your trust in princes, as one David said, and what a much sillier thing it is to expect wisdom from the mouth of grown-ups and peace from the dreams of presidents.

"There is an old riddle which I cannot fully remember about something which goes round and round the house, and up and down the house, but never goes 'nto the house. I forget the answer, but by what I member of the question I think it must refer to the ce Conference. Yet, to do it justice, the Peace 'erence has entered the house to this extent: t has put its foot in it. It has now been sitting ee weeks, and everybody is cross with every- se; and everybody is preoccupied with the y want to see their friends get ground, and

everybody is bothering mightily over small nations, and the smaller the nations are the more their friends proclaim that this particular small nation has the root of European Peace indigenous on its soil or in its sea. Clemenceau wants to get to work; Lloyd George wants to get to work; Wilson, whether or no he knows how they ought to do it, wants to get to work. But we must stop and consider the rolling-stock of Syrian railways, the dock dues of eastern Adriatic ports. Fat food that, for men of Lille to feed their babies with! Why must men, when they get together in droves, even droves of picked cattle, always behave so talky-talky, so tarry-a-whilish? Six months ago the words 'The Paris Peace Conference' would have been words that might have come straight from the New Testament to troubled hearts. Well, we can add to them from the New Testament now. This is the Conference of the Peace that passeth all understanding, and I wish I could accuse myself of flippancy in saying so.

"*March.*—We are told meanwhile that the drafting of the preliminary terms of peace, or the terms of preliminary peace (both phrases can apparently be considered applicable), is nearly over. Optimists talk of it being finished in a fortnight. This is at least a cheerful thought with which to while away the time of waiting. Another piece of good news is contained in the announcement that the Conference is considering not only all the vexed questions that surround the Adriatic, but also the left bank of the Rhine and the frontiers of Germany. This is almost the first time that the public has been allowed to suppose that the Conference is dealing with Germany. It is also understood that Belgian claims are occupying its attention to a large extent. It is pleasant to find the Conference returning little by little to the

matters which on November 11 seemed, to the principal parties in the war, the only objects on the horizon.

"*April.*—The Conference is strangely like a husband to the public. It says after breakfast that it has a busy day before it, and mustn't be disturbed. It goes and shuts itself up in its study, and emerges only when hungry. At the end of the day it is surprised to find that its wife is worn out by the fact that all the tradespeople have put up their prices, the cook has left, she has not had one moment to herself to get on with her accounts or her linen-mending (what would happen if wives retired to their rooms and demanded uninterrupted spells of time for their work?), and that, anyhow, she does think the Conference might tell her something of what it's been doing instead of sulking in a chair or going off to the club. Then the Conference, anxious to keep her quiet, says that she wouldn't understand, and that she'll know all in good time, and, anyhow, it's tired and doesn't want to talk about work; and she says that some one has told her that it was working to-day at the Rhine Problem, and it replies something about damning gossips and busybodies, and if it can't get any peace in its own house it will work elsewhere; and it goes to the study and shuts the door with more firmness than politeness, and the public goes and takes it out of her cook. And so we go on, exasperated by the long waiting, exhorted by reasonable friends not to be too hard on the people who are settling our future for us, but unable to rid ourselves of a conviction that, however hard the delegates are working, however much they have to do, *still* it's a long time to be kept waiting, and that it's lucky Tommy didn't wait to discuss things before he went over the top. We are glad to remember, on the authority of a crabbed and much-married gentleman, that they also serve who

only stand and wait, and we feel that at this rate we are doing signal service to our respective countries.

"The papers every morning are full of little paragraphs about the Conference. They deal with many countries and many peoples, but their distinguishing feature is that they all seem to mean much the same thing. The Paris *New York Herald* touches a cheerful note in the middle of the suspense by publishing a little map showing the progress of Bolshevism. The tax on butter has been lifted, and the price has gone up with it. Our gas costs us double what it used to, and won't at any price dream of doing any heating. On the other hand, it sometimes poisons you if you stand over it trying to cook. The public protests, and the press emits a daily moan about it; but the company stands firm, smiles pleasantly, and says perhaps some day things will change. The Socialists howl at Pichon in the Chamber because he tries to answer their questions; and weep bucketsful every morning—bucketsful of printers' ink—over Jaurès, who would have given them the talking-to of their lives if he had been here.

"The fact is that we are living in a jumble of things little and big, as though a charity bazaar had been melted down and we were swimming for our lives in it. We can hardly any longer tell which things matter and which don't, but we cling to the spar afforded by the Conference promise of peace, and hope that at least will not fail us."

Of course we could hardly help being depressed. The city was still crammed full of strangers of all nationalities, and prices continued to mount. And all our geography had gone flying into splinters; we did not know anything at all about half of the oppressed nationalities in whom we were asked to take an interest; and when we read what they had said before

this or that committee it looked as though they did not know anything at all about the war as we knew it. When finally Italy and President Wilson had a serious set-to about Fiume, at the exact moment when the German delegates were due at Versailles, the public felt it had received a knock-down blow. Italy and America were Allies, and here was a spectacle to provide for the gloating eyes of the German delegates! There was intense anger in the air in those days.

"When the war broke out it was natural that, even amidst the tremendous events on the northern Front, there should be much anxiety as to what Italy was going to do. When it became certain that she was not going to throw her lot in with Germany, there remained the problem as to whether she would remain neutral or become an Ally. She was in everybody's thoughts, on everybody's lips. Three years later, when the Austrian advance rolled down upon her from the hills and crumpled her Front, the anxiety here amounted to anguish. But neither in '14 nor in '17 was she more present to our thoughts than she is now.

"President Wilson's statement has thrown us all into violent agitation. There is no detail connected with it to which we do not lend the liveliest interest, whether trivial or important. We are almost as anxious to know whether it could possibly be true that it fell upon the Italian delegation out of the blue as we are to know what will come of the thing itself. Obviously, if Signor Orlando had had forty-eight hours' notice that if Italy did not abate her demands President Wilson would make a statement, he was far from guessing its nature, still less that he would first hear of it later than the nearest newsboy, and by the same means. The moment of publication, no less than the means of conveying it to the Italians, was

extremely unfortunate. It is certainly not to be wondered at that the Italian delegation felt itself to have been slighted in a deliberate and obvious manner, and saw withdrawal as the only course which could preserve the dignity so rudely attacked.

"French opinion, on the whole, is pro-Italian. But it is much more strongly pro-peace. Anybody who delays peace now will run the Kaiser a close second in unpopularity. Fiume is immensely important, and Italy is immensely important; but this importance is more a fact mentally possessed by the French public than an actual realisation, in which heart and feeling have any part. It amounts to this, that Wilson and Orlando had better fight it out, but for God's sake let them do it quickly and between themselves.

"President Wilson's waning popularity with the mob should not, in his own interests, be submitted to any rude shock just now. The word 'idealist' is rapidly acquiring a half-humorous, half-acid flavour in the general vocabulary. The news that he could not receive the Italian Ambassador at Washington, just half an hour before the *Temps* came out with his statement, because he 'would be receiving people in his study,' aroused that curious, relentless public memory of bygones which will sleep so peacefully if left alone, but can be roused by a trifle, a phrase, a word. The man in the street is inclined to query: 'Or was he meditating in his garden?' But obviously Mr. Wilson could not receive such a visitor when he knew that in a few minutes his bombshell was to explode in the Hôtel Edouard VII. by means of the afternoon Press. It would have been awkward, for instance, if the Italian delegate had happened to pick up the *Temps* while waiting for Mr. Wilson to free his study of other visitors! Meanwhile the

public is getting absolutely exasperated by the whole Conference, and cannot speak with civility of it.

"Gradually the Conference approaches the notion of the average citizen as to what such a body should be. From seventy it has been threshed out to ten, from ten to five, from five to four, and with each reduction it becomes apparent that a great increase in the efficiency of the machine has been made. The whole Press is crying aloud for haste, and the Socialists, who are only prevented by their avowed love for Mr. Wilson from disapproving of it, lock, stock, and barrel, have a resigned face and a tapping foot —symptoms which can be studied, but should not be neglected, in any angry man or woman. Not that the Socialists are as important as they are noisy, but one does not want their views and the views of the rest of the public to be the same in one matter, lest they should seize the appearance of identity to magnify their own power.

"When the war broke out, the individual past life of one's own self became a dream; a tale told by one's nearest friend, but not one's own property, not a thing one had experienced. We all sprang armed and mature from the forehead of Mars on August 1, 1914. Our childhood had never existed, but we had a curious insight into the childhood of some one who bore our own name, although it was vague and dreamy. Just the same thing has happened to us now. I cannot believe that I am the same person who lived the life I lived throughout the war; and when I look round at the great ones of the earth I fancy this must be a truth, and that nobody is the same. We have all been changed at Armistice by the Little People. The energetic, war-making leaders have become vacillating and patient; the never-sheathe-the-sworders think more of the Pacific than of Belgium;

the voices that thundered To work! To work! now make speeches in favour of forming sub-commissions to report on the ramifications of labour questions in the new kingdom of Godknowswhere, and the necessity of withdrawing troops from the neighbouring republic of Godknowswhy. Like Mahomet's coffin, we are between heaven and earth, but, unlike Mahomet, we are not peaceably asleep within it."

We had other subjects of distrust. Just about the time of the wretched Fiume business King Albert came to Paris by air to look into the question of the Conference's attitude to Belgium. Nobody had been talking about Belgium for a long time; her post of official martyr of the war had faded from the memories of those who in full sympathy bestowed it on her. We did not know why King Albert had come, save that it was to prevent a great wrong being done; and those who knew the fiery nature of some of the interviews caused by his visit were shown that Fiume was not the only danger among our difficulties.

Then we had the affair of the Two Verdicts. In February, Cottin shot at Clemenceau, and all but killed him. He was one of those unhappy creatures with "a capacity for entertaining thoughts too big for their understanding. His face is that of a dreamer —weak, certainly not ignoble, intelligent, unpractical. His attitude so far is that of a man who knows he is right. When the crowd tried to lynch him, he cried, 'Do as you like; I have succeeded.' This is a dangerous type of mind, the type of mind which produces martyrs who are not saints. If reason could reach him in those recesses of his brain where a poet would keep his poems, and he has kept his notions of humanity, it would long ago have modified his views, springing from other parts of his own consciousness. It is impossible to convince a man that

he is wrong who is intelligent enough to have argued with himself before resorting to action, yet not intelligent enough to distinguish between vague ideas and reality. Cottin is said to have given, as a reason for shooting at an old man who had steered France through her worst days, the fact that 'he had decided' (O youth! How easy it is to be God in the twenties!) 'that every man had a right to life and happiness.' It is not a logical reason for killing anybody.

"One cannot hate the wretched youth. He went about his business with a determination which was not callous, with a conviction which even the sound of his own revolver could not shake. He ran a long way after the motor-car, firing till his pistol was empty. Criminal he is, but of a strange type. His crime is less his own than that of the fire-eaters and sword-swallowers who please themselves by doing their tricks in the morning Press to an uneducated crowd which is willing to call a juggler a worker of miracles. Cottin was a quiet, well-behaved youth. He did his work without much evidence of cleverness, but thoroughly. He drank water and black coffee, which is a highly moral but an extremely dangerous diet. He did not smoke, and any smoker will tell you that that is demoralising to the soul, and negatively bad for the carpet. He read scientific and philosophical books, when Mrs. Barclay and the author of *The Exploits of Elaine* would have been better for him. He went to bed early, and got up late, and going to bed early is a dreadful thing to do. I only know one man who does it regularly and has kept his reputation as an intelligent person; but his hair is prematurely white.

"It seems that Cottin is one of those abnormal and unfortunate creatures who have been dowered by Nature with a native superiority far above his intel-

lectual equipment, like the men who crucified Christ, therein honestly following their convictions, so honestly that Christ begged their forgiveness on the ground that they knew not what they did."

It was a bold move on the part of the Government to sentence Cottin to death, and immediately afterwards to acquit Villain, who killed Jaurès, the great Socialist leader, at the beginning of the war. Cottin was subsequently reprieved by Clemenceau's request, but that did not minimise the force of the challenge flung at the feet of the Socialists. Villain shot at and killed his man; Cottin only wounded his victim. The first was left for five years in prison and then acquitted. The second was immediately brought to justice and sentenced to death. Everybody felt that there was here a serious injustice; the Socialists gained in a moment the support of every fair-minded observer in their dismay and fury at the acquittal. Yet apparently the Government was strong enough to challenge, and support the challenge. The syndicalist press foamed at the mouth, but, instead of taking any effective action, sank back into its usual condition of venomous grumbling.

Another challenge of the same kind had equally little sequel, when the May-Day demonstration of Labour was treated with the utmost brutality by the Paris police, who declared they were acting under orders. They kicked and trampled men and women, they were far too ready with their revolvers, and those who saw their behaviour were absolutely sickened. This day was the bottom of the wretched slope of depression down which we had been slipping during the Conference, and the final bitterness was added by the thought that the Germans at Versailles would suck up greedily every word of the morrow's papers. That same night I wrote:

"May Day! Honoured of poets, symbol of spring and reawakening! You have at least provided us with something to think of other than Mr. Woodrow Wilson and the Adriatic! This has been a heart-breaking day. The last time I mounted to a window on the boulevards to watch a crowd out to express its feelings was on November 11. Five wretched months have wrought this difference! Five months of deliberations among lawyers and statesmen and idealists and axe-grinders and the general argu-barguers have brought us from that noble exaltation to this mean epic of mud and cat-calls. Why? cries the citizen, why, why, why? Everything that was true then is true now. If we rejoiced then it was with reason, and the reason for rejoicing remains. If these voices that shouted along the boulevards this afternoon for the downfall of Clemenceau were silent last November for one reason or another, how is it that the myriad voices that shouted for him on November 11 are silent to-day? It is this silence that matters, not the noise. What has brought it about? On what horrible downsloped greasy path are we entering, which can bring about this most miserable of May-days? Who is *doing* it?

"This afternoon about eight hundred cavalry passed along the boulevards towards the Place de la République. In their horizon-blue they sat their chestnuts well; here and there a dapple-grey broke the brown, and one strawberry roan bore his ridiculous name proudly on their outskirts. Blue trench helmets topped the ample coats of these men; carbines were slung behind them; they were fighting men, and they were the fighting men of France; and they wore the clothes that were worn by the men who saved Verdun.

"Well, they passed along the boulevards, and their horses' hooves made a wooden clopping on the roadway, and people stopped to watch them; and they were allowed to pass in polite silence. In silence! And on the morning of November 12 there wasn't a voice in Paris that was not hoarse with cheering for these men and their like!

"Oh! What has come over us? What horrible sea-change has eaten the good flesh from our bones and left those to rot in the deep sea-mud? We are but the skeletons of the people we were. Nothing keeps in its place, nothing is healthy and right and strong; we seem lost in a sea of doubt and dirt.

"This morning opened with a gently obstinate downpour; the sort of downpour which rustles down from heaven with an 'I've-always-done-this-and-nothing-shall-stop-me-doing-it' air. Housewives, warned that Labour meant to get back its own upon the class upon which it lives, had made all their preparations, so that well-meaning citizens of their circle, who pay more than they can afford for a style of life which is but half what they might expect, might at least have candles when electricity stopped, ham although the butchers were closed, butter although the dairyman was absent, and some sort of stores with which to feed the acquaintance who came ravening from his unkempt bedroom in his foodless hotel. In the streets nothing stirred save a few folk travelling beneath umbrellas from their bare cupboard to the tables of their friends. No domestic servants were to be seen issuing proudly under flags and umbrellas from the homes of their mistresses; there where the three meals rested remained the domestic servant. But everybody else—except the middle classes which have to earn their living by earning it to the last farthing—everybody else was waiting for the afternoon.

"At three o'clock the boulevards were not empty, in spite of a persistent 'drizzle,' so-named by Scots, who form the major part of the population of Central Paris, but more rightly named 'une pluie implacable' by the French scattered among them. Hundreds of families had come out to enjoy Labour Day, and were doing it in the open because the cinemas were closed. In the middle of a little group which was howling to Heaven to abase the Army (in absent-minded tones and without a pretence of meaning it) walked a stout young woman in black silk, with very high heels. On one side of her went her husband, in faded blue uniform, holding an umbrella over her; on the other, her small boy, of eight or thereabouts, in a brilliant bright blue uniform, embroidered with a great many incompatible decorations, and bearing in addition the lanyard of the Legion of Honour. Is is likely that such a party had come out to do mischief?

"The fact is that half the crowd was there because they had nothing else to do; they were not the people who had ordained a general strike because they had grievances; they were the people who, because there was a general strike, had a holiday, and because of the general strike had no cheery means of spending it. They walked in the procession because it was better than staying in a stuffy small room, or because it was amusing to hear people shouting, or because they were going the same way. I walked in it myself, because I was in one place and wished to remove myself to another, and that other happened to be in the direction in which everybody else was walking. That reason, sufficient as it may appear, would have had no weight at all with the Paris police had I gone near them. Because, at the Place de l'Opéra, some unfortunate officer or minion of a

LES HYMNES ALLIÉS



God save the King

Dieu garde notre roi
Longue vie au noble roi
Dieu garde le roi

God save our gracious King
Long life our noble King
God save the King

Image de Georges Cochet. Cette image remplacera celle que le "Nouvel Essor" a mise en vente rue des Saints Pères.

LES HYMNES ALLIÉS.

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short-sighted State thought that this orderly, cheerful, damp and ever damper and therefore shortly-to-home-going crowd ought to be stopped from being orderly or cheerful or likely to go home. So cavalry barred the way, police surged from behind the cavalry, and the crowd, whether Socialist or not, lost its temper and did what to it seemed fit.

"The result was a great deal of kicking and beating, and, as it seemed to the onlooker, unnecessary brutality. Later we heard of other matters—the Faubourg St. Honoré and the Rue Royale littered with hats and umbrellas after a cavalry charge; the fire-hose turned down the former, in the direction of the British Embassy—no offence intended, but only to hurry up the fleeing crowd—a four-deep barrage of cavalry necessary at every outlet of the Place de la République. The police at this time are heavily censoring reports of what happened, and, one can only remark, just like them! They have deliberately joined battle with an enemy who was lacking in every arm save this, which the police have vouchsafed them, of a legitimate grievance. If that damp, cheerful, respectable crowd had been allowed to follow the weary bearer of a draggled red flag round Paris until he in desperation deposited it in the nearest doorway and went home to his supper, to-day would have remained in one's mind as a Socialist failure. But the police have spoiled that; they have turned it into a Socialist crucifixion, and that will be as troublesome to the Government as was another crucifixion to Rome. When you see a policeman running about with a naked sword seeking whom he may slash, simply because he feels he would like to do some slashing and here's an opportunity, nobody can help feeling that there is something wrong with that policeman or with the man who gave him his orders.

"And where is the Tiger? Can he really afford to meditate in his lair while such things take place? Where is the Tiger of November? Where is Foch? Where is the Armistice? Where are our victories? What do the dead cry in the night to this degenerate posterity of five months? What does it all mean?

"Thank Heaven, there are plenty of us who know what answer Logic and Reason and the other male gods would give to these questions, and can still say No: *No*: NO! There is an ultimate Right which must be safeguarding us; we cannot believe otherwise. To-day has not been France. To-day has been an ineptitude in a Paris gown. That there is something larger, finer, more real than this we outsiders believe—we who are not striking for half-work and double-pay, and are bearing the inconvenience as cheerfully as we can. Away behind this sickly May-Day Paris of pea-soup sky and muddy ground we see that blessed word of salvation, which will support our belief in France until our dying day: Verdun!

"How we need it!"

It is pleasant to approach that day in May when the Peace Treaty was handed to the Germans, although the confirmed pessimists were and are anxious to point out the weak points of that treaty. The fact was, that the details of the Conference had so crowded with troubles the minds of those best acquainted with them, that they had quite forgotten the very plain point of view of the public in France; and when the worried statesmen and their worn-out secretaries saw the general enthusiasm, they could hardly understand that it arose from the joy which had dwelt in the ordinary man's heart ever since November 11.

Versailles had been taking its unwelcome guests very quietly, and only taking very small trouble to look at them.

Even on the day when the Peace Treaty was handed to the German delegation, there was only a small crowd. As somebody said, if the same occasion had been set in, for instance, Hampton Court, there would have been a crowd that would have made a football audience look positively sparse. In Versailles it could easily have been numbered by hundreds, and they had come to see the Allied delegates, not the Germans, who were chivalrously spared the necessity of driving publicly to their humiliation, and so were allowed to come through their private portion of the park.

I was not privileged to enter the great white dining-room of the hotel where the presentation took place. I know the room. Once I dined there; once I found it full of cheerful Tommies with drawn white faces; iodoform hung in the air, and it seemed impossible that one should ever return to that room when it was given up to its destined uses. The matron was giving out boots to a party of convalescents, who were due to go back to the Front next day. A man sitting by the window with a rug over his knees, called out: "Now look 'ere, Sister, none of your bloomin' favouritism; ain't yer goin' ter ask me what size *I* take?" He was quite cheery about it, and his mates laughed, though the matron only managed a very wan smile—for he had had both legs amputated.

Now another sort of history was being made in that room, and let us hope that nobody will forget the first scene when the second and its successors are being recorded. The scene within was not very picturesque, but outside it was impressive to a degree. The Trianon Palace Hotel is a large, Ritzified white building, with a portico decorated by white columns. The pale blue of the uniforms worn by

the Guard of Honour, the deep blazing blue of the sky, the marvellous young green of the trees, the intense white of the house, and a cheerfully flaunting bed of the most cheeky-looking forget-me-not (ironic accident!) I ever saw, all made up a picture which can never be forgotten.

Cars bringing the delegates drove up in quick succession, and the officer in charge had the delicate task of deciding for whom the guard should present arms, for whom remain with them grounded, and for whom stand at ease. M. Clemenceau looked tired but indomitable; as for President Wilson, who drove up alone, one can only say that, unlike a celebrated character in *Alice in Wonderland*, who left a smile behind, his, like Cyrano's nose, preceded him by about a quarter of an hour. Mr. Lloyd George and Mr. Bonar Law looked distinctly happy, and Mr. Balfour positively beamed. They all in turn vanished through the door in a sort of tornado of hand-shakings and hat-liftings. The few people admitted to the grounds to witness this scene were nearly all pressmen and photographers. When Marshal Foch arrived they broke into irresistible applause. That was the only demonstration of the afternoon; even M. Clemenceau was allowed to pass with no further salute than is contained in the inevitable twisting of notebook leaves and turning of camera-handles.

Between the presentation of the terms and the Signature of Peace Paris tasted again in a slight degree the sensation of suspense. It became more and more certain that Brockdorff-Rantzau would not consent to the terms, and more and more uncertain whether the German Government would. Up till the last moment given to the German to decide, we were kept wondering; and when the first gun went off at 6.55 p.m. on June 28 to tell the waiting city that he had

made up his mind to accept the terms, there rose such a sigh and such a prayer and such a shout from millions as perhaps have never mingled before in the unresponsive air.

The new delegates did not arrive at Versailles till several days later—two middle-class Germans with the very ordinary names of Müller and Bell. The very day after their arrival, Peace was signed, Paris and Versailles no longer tried to hold in check their joy. Statesmen might look a gift-peace in the mouth, but the crowd certainly did know its mind. From Paris to Versailles it brought out its sandwich, and its camp-stool, and its cotton flag, for no other purpose than to catch a glimpse of the chiefs of the Conference as they tooled by in the morning to Versailles, and back in the afternoon to the Porte Dauphine.

Even the audience in the Galerie des Glaces shared the opinion of these picnickers, although it was largely composed of diplomats and journalists, who seldom believe in anything, and never admit that they ever do. It is a point of pride with them, and makes them more dependent on their wives than any other classes. But (to quote a daily paper) "that is another story, as Robert Louis Stevenson used to say" (*sic*). Yet even such an assembly as that could not be wholly armoured against the moment when into the stuffy gilded loftiness of the crowded Galerie des Glaces four Germans walked, in correct half-mourning, made cardboard bows to Clemenceau and his peers, and, with faces like paper and jaws like iron, wrote with their own names the miserable fate of their country. And, in addition, had then to return to their seats and watch the Allied delegates writing with their own names the glory of their countries.

It is true that many of these delegates did not look very cheerful. Mr. Lloyd George had been ill;

besides, he is a Celt, and, as such, liable to be inconvenienced by his own appreciation of the occasion. Mr. Wilson did his best to look non-committal. Clemenceau did his best not to smile. Saionji may have tried not to look inscrutable; he did not succeed. Mr. Balfour walked round to the fateful table (thanks to the arrangement of the daïs, all the delegates looked as though they were going in for the slippery pole competition at a regatta) with his usual air of being a very good boy enjoying himself a great deal.

The utter impossibility of the atmosphere sent some of the invited guests to the balconies, others out of the building altogether. The latter saw the real ceremony of the day. They saw the guarded tan of the terrace; they saw the sheer edge which always suggests the sea; approaching it (after arguing with many uniformed zealots that having admittance to the Galerie des Glaces ought to prove one innocuous in the grounds), they saw, massed at the bottom of the slope, beyond the Latona Basin, a curious carpet which was neither grass nor flowers, but which stretched nearly to the Apollo basin.

This carpet was merely a crowd. It had come there, in many cases, from miles away, starting at amazingly early hours of the morning. It was waiting there merely to watch the distant windows of the Galerie des Glaces. The colours of its dresses, the shapes of its hats, made a pattern less bold, but not less varied, than that of the historic fabric which covered the parquet within the Galerie. But things happened to it. For within a very few minutes, the German delegates, scorning their new privileges, which would have enabled them to mingle with the Allies, fled with but a poor semblance of dignity from a side-window into their cars; the crowd broke the line of soldiers and police, and hurried to look at them,

though without a hostile sound or action; the guns of Satory burst into a spirited repetition of their behaviour on air-raid nights; the sun came out; the fountains all over the grounds, with an ineffable rustle, awoke from their sleep and rose with all their plumes into the air; and Clemenceau, with the other delegates, appeared on the terrace. He appeared; and, in an instant, vanished, drowned in the crowd. He did not even rise the classic three times. When last seen, he was smiling, as though indeed drowning were pleasant; but there were people all over him, and more surging up the backs of those who were there already; and others tearing to pieces a huge tricolour bouquet which had been offered to him, and entrusted to a perspiring and beaming policeman, and throwing the fragments at him with the fury though not the intention of Socialist leaders. And they were all, without an exception, howling his name. They bore him forward, and with him a very pale-faced gentleman in black and silver who was responsible for the Tiger's safety, and they very nearly cast him down about seventy very steep stairs into a basin pricked with statues and very wet with fountains; but black and silver triumphed at the last, helped by the fact that when this concourse appeared at the edge of the staircase that variegated carpet at its base broke, and dissolved itself into a massive roar almost worthy of British throats.

It must be admitted that Mr. Wilson, who walked with Clemenceau until he was made to canter by the crowd, and Mr. Lloyd George, who kept modestly behind until a score or so of howling cadets pushed him forward, did not in this scene count for one single sou. Nobody thought of them, nobody called for them, nobody cared about them. Great man or great *arriviste*, to-day was Clemenceau's day. Even the

Americans in the crowd were unanimous in their cries. We are a queer kind of invention, we humans, when we think to do a man honour by howling his name at him; yet the recipient of that compliment always seems to know what it means.

Peace was signed on June 28. Shortly afterwards it was announced that the triumphal return of the Armies would take place on the National Fête-day, July 14. From the moment of that announcement Paris turned her eyes and her thoughts to the Arc de Triomphe, and it would have needed an earthquake or the outbreak of another war to distract them. Five years of war, of loss, of endurance, of hardship, of political crises, sickening when they were small and disquieting when they were great, of sour bread and empty purses, above all, of waiting for letters and praying against telegrams—they were all wiped out. With one impulse every heart in France turned to that plot of ground dedicated to French glories, soiled and stained by German feet in 1871, now to be for ever reconsecrated.

CHAPTER XIV

THE ARC DE TRIOMPHE

THE bright morning broke upon a city that had not slept; a city paved with faces. It hummed like a hive with voices that no vigil could tire. Every beauty that flower and flag could lend were smiled upon by heavens as tender as they were lovely. July had drawn forth a day woven night and day during five years from the heart-strings of many millions. That seemed natural; had the sky been grey or weeping, the wind chill, it would have seemed as terrible and as wrong as if a law of nature had been set at naught.

Everywhere there came little hurrying figures, like stray drops of water falling towards the sea. The sea heaved and swayed and murmured, and through all its length it was parted as the Red Sea was parted, because the "Soldiers of God" were to pass through.

In the midst of that living sea rose an island; the only unmoved, unchangeable spot within the range of the eye, the only spot undecked with colour. The Arc de Triomphe, Gibraltar of human glory, stood untouched by human enthusiasm, apparently insensible to all that passed around it. The chains that guarded it had fallen; the highway that led beneath it was open. The golden monument to the Dead had been moved aside, and as far as eye could reach, falling away from that tremendous mass, ran the empty pathway between the piled-up waves of the people.

There were millions of those strange little upright moving creatures called human beings beside that pathway; most of them were merely units in millions, some of them represented principalities and powers. They were all one that morning. They were all very quiet, and their eyes turned continually towards the highway.

It was a day of Victory; and that was why the first communicants at her sacrament were men on stretchers, men on crutches, blind men, one-armed men. They went before the valid armies that they might lend one more meaning to the blue shade under the Arch. If they were not loudly greeted, perhaps they understood why. They were greeted as loudly as their welcomers could manage.

After a pause, there came a sound of trumpets, trumpets that blew in nasal, insistent thirds, the melody of armies who return triumphant from war. The sound floated down the morning air; and all the eyes of the human sea turned upwards to the blue shadow under the grey Arch. Through it came stepping, dark in the shadow, sky-blue as heaven in the golden sun, two private soldiers and a young officer—the Army itself. Eyes fixed ahead, step unfaltering, the three acolytes of Victory passed down the empty road; and, as they came into the sunshine, suddenly a little blue figure a hundred feet above them, on the roof of the Arch, unfurled the flag of France, and waved it in the summer sky as though its colours longed to blend with the trumpets and the shouting. A silver star shot far into the zenith, and from near and far the guns marked with thunder the steps of those who marched.

Behind the acolytes came marshals and generals, and after them many armies with banners. The blue shadow fell upon them all as they passed, the

sunshine received them, and the Arch, clean once more after forty-eight years, its stain washed out beneath the dust of their steps, reared its grey brow into the sky as they left it and passed on to salute the Dead, and thence into the waiting city. But the shadow and the sunshine seemed to keep, as the Arch did, a star and a flag especially for those first three figures, who, steady and unswerving, carried with them that oblation of suffering and loss and the splendour of sacrifice which France and her Allies laid, day and night, through five long years, upon the altar of national honour and universal right.

"ALL'S CLEAR"



"La Berloque," the merry bugle-call which told Paris that an air-raid was over.

APPENDIX

PARIS TO-DAY. A CHAPTER FOR VISITORS

PASSPORT restrictions are being diminished, and all the sea-routes to England are open again, with the exception, perhaps, of the St. Malo-Southampton route touching at the Channel Islands. One of the first results of these restored conditions has been the very large number of French schoolboys whose parents have sent them to England to study the language during their holidays. I have been asked myself to find no less than seven French boys places in British families for the vacations. Their parents will in most cases count on taking such boys over, and bringing them back again, and will naturally stay a week on each journey, so England may prepare at the end and beginning of term for an influx of French people, mostly of the solid *bourgeoisie*, which follows this plan for reasons far less sentimental than commercial. They perceive that in the future a really fluent knowledge of English will be worth much capital to its owner, and that acquaintanceship with our odd foreign ways, such as can only be gained by living among us, will also be very valuable.

But the French who go to England are as needles among hay to the British who will be coming to France. Once the passport difficulties are set aside, they will be innumerable. It is a pity that we could not have had an official announcement in all Allied countries that all wishing to visit graves should be allowed to pay that visit before passport restrictions were otherwise relaxed. There are already thousands of tourists on any given Sunday, hundreds on other days, tramping with laugh and horseplay over the prostrate altars of Ypres and Verdun. In a short time, there will be practi-

cally no difficulty in the way of any Allied or associated or neutral subject who wishes to come to France. She will welcome them; she must. Her economic necessities are pressing, her administration is slow, and trammelled in red tape as closely as Donatello's babies were swaddled. She must welcome money, even if it comes from that type of tourist who audibly counts up graves, and says they are "thrilling." From all over the world visitors will come to visit the battle-fields of France, and nearly all of them will come to Paris before they leave the country.

Those who do not know the city will find an amazing hotch-potch of nations and amusements, with a few austerities appearing among them, even as rock crops out upon the greensward of a hillside—austerities due to war conditions, and left, like the outcrop, to speak of past convulsions. It is even possible that during the coming winter of '19–20, these outcrops will be numerous. With a world-shortage in wheat, we may have our bread-tickets again; with strikes all over the world in coal-mines, the diminished output of the world may throw us once again hopefully upon the breast of Mother Nature, praying her to send us a mild winter, such as she ordained before the war, when, with plenty of coal in the cellar, one sat with open windows on Christmas Day, wondering if it would be ridiculous to fan oneself. No such winter have we had since the war!

The visitor to Paris in the winter of 1919 who knew the city before the war will find her just recognisable. He will be told tales he can hardly believe, of what she was like in the Dark Years, and he will never be able to understand what the transition was like.

Paris never was as noisy as New York, and her sky-signs, to those who know the display on Broadway, were laughable, and might have come from the toy counter of a department store. But Americans knew more than this about Paris, and the city they are seeing now is wonderfully different from their expectations. It is hardly surprising that they are astonished; Parisians themselves sometimes rub their eyes and marvel at the strange city they live in.

I have seen four cities called Paris. They had the same

streets and houses, the same clear skies, and spoke the same language; these were their only resemblances.

. . . . .

There was the Paris of August 1, 1914—and any date up till then. It was a city on whose life the sun might reluctantly set, only to give way to the myriad golden stars that shone from every shop and café, illumined from above by the cold moons of arc-lights. From restaurant and café floated a confused noise of eating, laughing, cork-pulling, set to the tumultuous accompaniment of some loud gipsy band, mostly strings. Between the acts, from every theatre streamed out crowds of beautifully dressed people, intent on having an ice or a cup of coffee and a brioche before returning to the dreadful stuffiness and crowdedness which put the French theatres miles behind even the English in comfort.

A stream of people endlessly lounged up and down the broad pavements; carriages, motor-cars, omnibuses, taxis passed like a cinema-film, occasionally tying themselves into dreadful knots round an excited policeman, who waved an ineffective white bâton and shouted like a fan at a baseball match. Beggars with post-cards to sell, or flowers, or mechanical toys, or guides to Paris, or songs, or what-not—anything to cloak, however thinly, their mendicancy—made life a burden to the crowds sitting outside the cafés.

With the closing of the theatres, a little of the animation departed from the Grands Boulevards, and a great deal began to appear farther up on the hill to the north of the city. From midnight till breakfast-time the gaudy restaurants of the Outer Boulevards were crammed with pleasure-hunters, in whose tired faces anybody could read that they had been hunting without finding it. In those places there were always two bands, and the one began its night's work before the strings of the other had ceased to vibrate. Everybody drank mediocre champagne at three or four times its worth. Everybody tangoed and bunny-hugged and matchiched. The men wore very high collars and the women very low gowns. And the *chasseurs* did a thriving trade in "prescriptions," which they got made up at neighbouring drug-stores

for clients whose eyes proclaimed them victims of morphine or cocaine.

Right on top of the hill, above this fake Montmartre, stood the quiet village, with its towering white church, to which the name rightly belongs. Those who climbed there during the night were rewarded by a wonderful sight; it was as though the stars of heaven had fallen to earth and laid themselves out in clusters and avenues. One could almost trace the various streets, and the line of the sordid outer boulevards was like the Milky Way turned golden.

With sunrise the revellers went home, and the cheery life of the real Paris began. Early-rising and industrious, the business day was in full swing by eight o'clock; the roaring Underground, the rumbling 'buses, were as full as they could hold. The air smelt deliciously of coffee and fresh rolls (he who knew not the brioches and the morning rolls of pre-war Paris knows not the real meaning of breakfast!) and the café-terraces were already full again.

That was a Paris of jewels, of gaiety, of hard work, of delicate fare, a city in which the pulse of love and life beat strong.

. . . . .

That was pre-war Paris—the Paris I knew down to July 31, 1914. On that Friday night the old Paris came to an end; on the following afternoon, with the mobilisation order was born a Paris that lived but a few months, a Paris for the first time entirely lovable, a Paris for the only time in her life really French.

In those days there was nobody here. That is an exaggeration, of course, but, looking back, it seems like a literal truth. I have stood on the Grands Boulevards at eleven in the morning and seen not one living soul up and down the whole length of them, not a vehicle. On the closed shop-fronts were rows of post-cards, with no one to guard or sell them, because there was no one to steal or buy. You could have gone to sleep in the middle of the road with no danger of being run over.

It was like a city in a tragic harlequinade; at any moment Harlequin might have danced out of the dairy into the sausage-shop, flicking a sleepy dog on his way, and Columbine

might have floated on her toes down the Avenue de l'Opéra. One night, sleeping in a room fronting on the boulevards, I was wakened by an unusual noise: it was somebody walking down the boulevards!

There were no buses, no trams, no Metro, no taxis, no cabs. The restaurants and cafés closed at half-past seven, and after that hour men did well to carry their papers on them, for fear of arrest as "unsubmitted" soldiers. We knew the Germans were in France, but not where they were. The few of us who remained in Paris lived with held breath, waiting for we knew not what.

It was a silent city, full of sunshine and green trees; and over the empty streets hung a wonderful pageant of flags; from every window floated the bright colours of the Allies, adding to the extreme beauty of this silent city. She was like a bride thrown into a magic sleep to wait her bridegroom. That was the unforgettable Paris; the heroic, smiling, soul of France showed herself there; and one wondered if one had dreamed the hectic life of a week before.

In 1918 there was a very different city. What with the restrictions on the sale of liquor, the early closing of the cafés and restaurants (which entailed the never-opening of the Montmartre establishments), the vanishing of all but two lines of omnibuses, the dark streets almost empty of traffic after ten o'clock, and all the rest of it, the city of that day was no more Paris than she is London. To take only one little detail: in the great cold, before the war, at this season, the café terraces would have been fairly full, and each would have been warmed by two tall fat chimney-shaped stoves, full of glowing embers. But those were days when you treated coal with the careless superiority of the served for the servant; you did not set it in brooches and rings, nor display it in windows in the Rue de la Paix, as was done in 1917. The biggest jeweller in that famous thoroughfare gave the middle of the window to the greatest rarity—one lump of coal, surrounded by adoring diamonds!

The art of Paris, too, was hidden from the visitor. The two great glories of France, the Venus of Milo and the Winged Victory, were huddled away in sandbags to a place of safety.

The lovely Cluny Museum was closed. The only museum fully open was that strange new collection at the Invalides, where art does not count, and the trophies of war attracted and attract crowds who perhaps would have cared much less for La Giaconda than they do for the grim records of shot and shell.

The fourth Paris I have seen is that of to-day. Post-war Paris is much more difficult to understand than any of the others. She is like a cocktail into which many strange things have been poured, and it is difficult to calculate the effect of the mixture.

Her gaiety has returned to her, but it is a gaiety in which the commercial spirit is obvious. Those who know only the half-mile triangle of which the Opera is the apex, will be satisfied by hearing that on the whole life has gone up 250 per cent. since the war. They will at once understand that the Triangle is living up to its reputation, as was inevitable, and they will need no further explanation. The traveller who lays no claim to superfine gilt-edging will receive some terrible shocks. The Paris of his recollection has gone, the Paris of which he boasted at home exists no more, and his first trip here will be a trip passed among what he can scarcely avoid calling robber tribes, because he will not understand the conditions under which we are living.

There was a theory in England before the war that Paris was a cheap place to live in. That was due to the fact that the traveller, used to counting a pound a day for his expenses, could get through Paris on less. It did not apply to the domestic plane of housekeeping, which was far higher here than in London, as I have said. The tourist in Paris who wanted to go to one of the chief restaurants of the town knew that he must pay high prices, and thought he was getting really Parisian cookery in return, whereas he was merely getting a very rich and sauce-y form of cosmopolitanised dishes. The French cookery which made the name of the French cook is to be found to-day in far other places than the brilliant halls of the expensive restaurant—in a bar, where nobody but men are welcome to meals, because the cook, a lady of opinions, does not think women "know how to eat"; in the place where the

chauffeurs used to feed, till their employers found it out; in a fourteenth-century house in old Paris, where you have to make yourself welcome before you may enjoy at tiny prices the best yeoman cookery in the world; in a quiet house which looks like a wholesale shop, with a long Southern name, where the most meagre surroundings may promise a short bill, but the most French of French cookery recompenses for its unexpected length. At the famous Paris restaurants real French cookery is not served. Everything has a sauce with it, and the sauce is always rich, and interrupted with unexpected matters. Mushrooms and truffles, chopped up, enliven a velvety arrangement of oils and fats which have been marvellously beaten, probably by machines unknown to the ordinary household, for at least twenty minutes, or else the velvetiness would be absent. That suggestion of velvet is worth four francs per head in the bill.

Perhaps more. Most visitors to Paris expect to go at least once in a week to the Café Superlative, let us say, or the Restaurant du Monde. Before the war, meaning to have a good time and treat themselves to the best of everything, they could not have expected to pay less than from half a guinea to fifteen shillings a head. They need not hope now to leave those portals, on a moderate computation, at less than two pounds a head, and the gentlest deviation in extravagance will make it three or four pounds a head—supposing, for instance, that two or three of the party take a peach each, or an apple, according to season, or that they are so unused to the tricks of these establishments that they take the smoked ham so guilefully offered during the *hors d'oeuvres*—and priced at six or seven francs per head extra!

The second-class restaurants of Paris—where one fed well, if without cosmopolitan elegance, for from seven to fourteen francs, according to the kind of meal one chose, where the cooking was good, and one could entertain friends in a seemly fashion—have changed their ways. Lucky indeed are their patrons if they pay less than twenty francs for a strictly frugal meal. They must not expect to entertain anybody for less than thirty or thirty-five francs a head.

I remember well the restaurants where students used to

take their meals for elevenpence-halfpenny—a shilling and a halfpenny for dinner because ices were included. They had three courses and cheese, half a bottle of beer, wine or cider, and coffee, and the choice of about a dozen dishes for each course. One cannot live so well now. The three courses are two and *hors d'oeuvres* (one gaunt sardine or three sad radishes), the beer or wine or cider are extra, the choice of dishes is down to four or five per course, the cheese is extra, and extra bad at that, the coffee is doubled in price and halved in strength, and the waiter will look at the sou which used to content him with an expression worthy of the butler who "only accepted gold."

Few women came to Paris without the settled intention to take away a hat. They meant to spend at least a third more on it than they would have spent in England, and they rightly expected that it would be at least three times more elegant and twice more durable than it would have been at home. They can now count that it will be three times as dear, even at present prices, only half as elegant, and not so durable as the home article. Tailor-mades they had better give up altogether. Soft afternoon and indoor frocks they can get, ready-made in cheap stuffs, made for themselves in good stuffs, at four times what they expect to give. Gloves, stockings, and underwear, unless one wishes for the very last thing in luxury, are far better bought at home. Let nobody suppose that because the cost of clothing has gone up so much in London they may as well make their purchases here. The twenty-guinea gown is sixty guineas, the four-guinea frock "run up by my little woman" comes to eight or nine. Materials bought for making up are very expensive, and not very reliable.

Of course, what remains, and always will remain, is the Paris touch, and that is worth immense sums of money to those who make a study of dress. It demands them freely. It has managed to institute a sort of tyranny over the average woman of western Europe and America, and, like all despots, makes heavy levies on the subjects who surround its throne. It really is a tyranny, because the Paris touch in itself is only valuable to the French. It takes genius to adapt clothes not

only to the personality but the nationality of those who are to wear them, and genius in that matter, unlike genius in the free arts, is usually extremely highly paid. Paris fashions, taken as they stand, are not at all becoming to Englishwomen. They are designed for small figures and small heads and small faces, for a type of liveliness peculiar to France, and for women who give far more time and attention to their toilet and their clothes than Englishwomen do.

The big dressmaking houses of Paris recognise this ; they are big houses because they do understand these subtleties. But the Paris ready-made garment or hat very seldom suits a foreign purchaser, and its prices this year are terrifying. Anybody who does come here to shop for the first time, may be counselled to buy the very quietest clothes on sale ; their elegance, and the fact that they are worn by an Englishwoman, combine to make them almost conspicuous at home. The pleasing eccentricities, the daring angle of a feather, which are merely amusing here will attract every eye in a London street, and the tongue of the street-boy will sum them up in piercing tones.

Visitors to Paris since the signature of peace find that her high prices are not confined to her shops. The cheap boarding-house which used to charge five or seven francs a day now charges twenty to twenty-five, for nothing like the same standard of living. The big hotels charge fantastic sums. One cannot get a room in one of them for much less than a sovereign a day, and the food is in proportion. They charge on the same scale as the big restaurants, where the highest price I have yet noted was twenty-eight francs for three cocktails, and ninety francs for a capon large enough for seven people ! This was certainly an extreme case, and the proprietor of the establishment was naïve enough to say that if the host had given him his card, showing that he was a journalist on a great Allied newspaper, the bill would have been very different ! He took five pounds off it without a murmur, and " hoped we would come again " !

For a long while, foreigners must expect to be robbed in shops and restaurants and hotels. There are so many profiteers who pay whatever they are asked, that the ordinary

person, with an ordinary income, falls a victim to practices of extortion intended for army contractors and coal-dealers. France confidently expects a year of unexampled activity in dealing with tourists. She knows that all who have watched with any sympathy her unequalled struggle for life will want to bring to her shores the interest that struggle has aroused. Ordinary curiosity, what one might call police-court curiosity, will attract thousands who will go to look upon Reims and Arras as they would have gone to look at the house where a murder has been committed. A sacred quest will bring parents from all over the globe to visit six feet of French earth. The thousand and one businesses connected with reconstruction will necessitate the presence of every sort of business man and agent. They will all come with full pockets, because they will not be able to get here without them.

France *must* exploit them; and she feels that, with regard to all these travellers save those who have come to visit lonely wayside graves, or uniform crosses distinct to their eyes only from thousands of others in military cemeteries, she has a right to take toll of their money. She is in need of money, and people who travel for pleasure must pay for it —that is her argument. It applies with special force to people who come to Paris, the centre of all pleasuring.

They will find very few scars upon her brilliant face. In most cases houses damaged by bombardment have been repaired, save where the destruction was wholesale. In the Rue de Rivoli, far along it, and beyond the limits of fashion, there is a corner where an ugly pile of ruin, inside the shell of a block of houses, speaks eloquently of disaster; in the Rue Geoffrey-Marie a gap in the line of tall houses shows where a whole tenement collapsed under a bomb, and buried thirty people in the cellars. In these two cases, there is some talk of leaving the ruins as they are, but this is hardly practicable. They are both situated in business quarters, where the value of land is extremely high, and as monuments they are lacking in every interest other than that of their origin. In other places there is no trace left of the projectiles which rained upon the city, save a splash or two made by shrapnel

in a stucco wall, or the air-hole into the Underground which was kindly made by a bomb while the local Council was debating whether they should spend money on making one or not!

In the Champs Élysées the two piles of German cannon remain to us from the miles of trophies with which the city was proudly decked since last October. There is a strong movement to leave these pyramids as they are, surmounted by the Gallic cock in bronze. At the Porte Maillot and the Porte Dauphine only the most observant will notice that there are fewer trees than there used to be; those that are missing were hewn down to form a very ingenuous system of defence in '14. Practically all the shops are open again, and the visitor who has dropped five years out of his experience of Paris will never know how strange that seems to residents here. We saw all the *commerce de luxe* shops shut; then one or two opened; then more; finally they were nearly all open. But both in the great shopping thoroughfares and in the quiet streets of small tradesmen, there were always a few shops closed. They bore no boards proclaiming that they were to let, but perhaps upon the main shutter hung the remains of a hastily written announcement: "Fermé pour cause de mobilisation. 2 Août, '14," or "Le patron et le personnel sont sous les drapeaux. Août, '14"—almost illegible relics of wonderful and terrible days.

Visitors to post-war Paris will never be able to understand what a wonderful story is symbolised simply by the fact that all the shops are open. There is a grocer's which I see every day, and never without something of the awe that a child would give to a fairy establishment where fairy godmothers sold magic sweets. For four years, since ever I came to its district, I knew it for a bogyful place of dinted shutters, mud-splashed and dust-whitened. The bourgeois French name above them grew dimmer and dimmer, the shutters retired more and more behind a veil of dirt, became more and more dinted by the accidents which haunt narrow cross-roads in a city where there is no speed-limit. The remains of a few pencilled words on a small card hanging from a drawing-pin, explained that on August 3rd, 1914, the last salesman had joined up. One wondered what ghostly piles of tinned fruit

and what dreadful remains of flour and butter and fruit waited silently in the dark. And now it is open! Repainted, bright, full of good things to eat, with apparently real people in it, and an open-air counter for fruit and dried vegetables, just as though nothing had happened—until you see the placards of prices. It is as though one had known intimately a ghost, and it had suddenly become solid and called itself John Brown. The tourist would be startled if he knew how many ghosts of the kind will for ever haunt the streets he treads so jauntily.

The theatres are full every night, but they have suffered from much the same blight that has fallen upon the London stage—too much foolery and not enough wit. The return to their casts of some of the actors who were mobilised has partly remedied a dearth of handsome young men which a year ago made the sort of play which requires them most dismal to witness. There are not many serious plays to be seen, short of the Français programmes, which continue to alternate the classic French drama with modern pieces of slightly morbid cast. The rest are mostly melodrama, or farces and light comedies of an advanced nature played at top speed. There is always the Grand Guignol, of course, but it has shown signs of difficulty in keeping up with the public mind in its acquaintance with horror. It is not so easy to frighten us as it used to be!

As a matter of fact, one of the most amusing pieces I have seen during the war was a Grand Guignol version of *The Mark of the Beast*, and it was certainly not meant to be funny. There were no chops, the Silver Man was clothed in a striped curtain, and when Fleete ought to have been roaring for raw meat he suddenly burst into tears and cried, "Mamma! Oh, Mamma!" As if this anti-climax were not enough, the wonderful adaptation ended with the final incident of *The End of the Passage*, and one was left wondering what Kipling would think about it. It was, of course, an attempt to portray upon a stage devoted to "thrills" a form of terror to which we had not become used. Obviously nobody could expect a war-time audience to be seriously upset by the fact that somebody shot seven other people, or somebody else strangled

an unpleasant old gentleman, or a third person crucified his enemy. The days have passed when these things startled us; we know too much.

The material difficulties of life in Paris since the Signature of Peace are not serious, as I have said. Taxis are fairly easy to get, save at certain hours, which are naturally the hours when one wants them. Quite frequently the drivers are perfectly civil in explaining that they won't take you north because they are on their way to their dinner west. Now and then they are even civil if they consent to take you because you are going their way. The hire of the shabbiest motor-car is from five to six pounds a day: a really presentable car costs far more, and the chauffeur must be coddled and considered as never was a belle coddled and considered at her first ball. Above all, he will not like to be hauled over the coals for his reckless driving. The nervous should walk, and never, never cross the road. The spirit of Don't Care has descended upon the chauffeur of Paris, whether he drive private car, taxi, or lorry; or even if he drive his own car, which represents his whole capital. The turn from the Place de la Concorde into the Champs Élysées at a busy hour looks more like a section of an American cinema film than an actual happening. The French chauffeur, never lacking in dash, and now rather bored by the easiness of driving along roads undiversified by shell-holes, has been further stimulated by the American driver. And those who have driven behind American chauffeurs, have felt the hot breath of omnibuses on their left ear while hungry lorries grasped at their right and tramways fruitlessly tried to bar the way, know that those who have been stimulated by the American driver are three degrees less safe than if they had been drunk. The Paris traffic to-day is a mill-race, a railway accident, and a cinema drama rolled together and several times multiplied. It is absurd to remember that five years ago we made protests about reckless driving. We didn't know what it was!

On the whole, Paris to-day is a feverish but very brilliant place. Entertaining has not reached a large scale, but the small dinner-party is more luxurious and more interesting than ever it was. Luncheon-parties are hurried, because

everybody has some work to do hamed to let it be thought that he has not—a war- his. Dances begin late and go on until early has onc come late; I know of one which only ended after lu... ...e next day. From the point of view of the visitor who has no friends here, and must judge of the city from outside, the chief attraction will certainly be the cosmopolitan crowds on the chief thoroughfares. They are not more cosmopolitan than were the pre-war crowds, but they are more easily identified and analysed, thanks to the many uniforms which the war has brought to Paris. Half an hour outside the Café de la Paix will present to the spectator such a shadow-show of nationalities as will recompense him for all his trouble and expense in visiting Paris, if he have but a spark of interest in mankind's proper study.

As some guide to an understanding of life in Paris, I give a few typical prices of necessities as they were in 1914, and as they were last April, since when, in most cases, if they have altered at all, it is to increase. In the summer, some of the fresh food-stuffs became a little cheaper, but only temporarily, and even then a cauliflower, for instance, of the size quoted below, would cost from 2*s.* 6*d.* to 3*s.* 6*d.* In translating prices I have taken the standard of 10*d.* to the franc, 25 francs to the £.

	1914		1919		Per
	£ *s.* *d.*		£ *s.* *d.*		cent.
Fillet of beef (per pound)	2 1		5 10		180
Leg of mutton (per pound)	1 4		5 10		337
Chicken (per pound)	1 4		6 3		368
Rabbit (per pound)	9		3 9		400
Cooked ham (per pound)	1 8		8 4		400
Turnips (bunch)	2		11		450
Cauliflowers	6		4 2		733
Celery-root (each)	1		1 8		1900
Bananas	1		5		400
Plums (per pound)	6		3 9		650
Sugar (per pound)	4		11		223
Coffee (per pound)	1 8		4 2		150
Macaroni (per pound)	5		1 0		130
Butter (per pound)	1 7		7 1		347
Roquefort cheese	1 4		6 8		400

	1914			1919			Per
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	cent.
Milk (quart)			4			8	100
Flour (pound)			2			6	200
Sweet cakes (pound)		2	1		10	6	400
Ordinary wine (quart)			5		1	8	400
Beer			4		1	0	300
Cider			2			10	400
Sheets (per pair)	1	4	2	10	0	0	733
Linen for sheets (per yard)		2	6	1	4	2	900
Dusters (dozen)		11	6	3	18	0	598

October.—Within the last two months prices have begun to fall a little, in spite of the disastrous rate of exchange against France. Food bought for the household is rather cheaper, but restaurants and hotels are dearer than ever. Of all I have written I only wish to alter the one item of dress materials and other textiles, which are sensibly cheaper since the police descended with inconvenient inquiries upon a large drapery shop.

Restaurants now stay open until 1 a.m., and night-life, more hectic than ever, is being resumed. Its prices and its dresses and its manners are more fantastic than ever.

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