

A VISIT TO ARRAS

IT was on a gusty day in early spring that I left the chateau at ——— and struck across the untilled fields to the high road. I had a day's leave and had decided to spend it in a visit to Arras, one of the great show places on the western front. At the cross-roads an empty field ambulance received me, and I was off upon my joy-ride. A change at Aubigny, into the care of a friendly R. F. C. man, and we were out on the great national highway which runs in Roman fashion from St. Pol to Arras.

One more transfer to the R. A. M. Corps was necessary, and it was under their friendly care that I rolled under the St. Pol gate of the city, down the Rue Gambetta, and got out at the great Neptune fountain which cleaves the street in two. Arras at last!

Not that the ride—or rather rides—had been uninteresting, particularly to a Scotsman. Every Highland regiment in existence seemed that day to have one or more battalions in the vicinity, and the roads were gay with the tartans. Moreover, what a contrast between the long snake-like streams of traffic, the fields scarred by shells, and then close by some little village apparently untouched by the war, save that it is women, old men, and boys who are working in the fields! Of the rest *nefas amplius loqui*. This day of April, 1917, however, the Boche knows part of what I saw.

The first view of Arras is disappointing to the connoisseur in ruins. In degrees of destruction it holds a place mid-way between the classic fragments of Ypres and the tawdry pretentiousness of Albert. The bulk of the city still stands very much as it must have stood in July, 1914; the greater part of the German fire being concentrated on certain buildings, the cathedral, the old episcopal palace, the hotel-de-ville, the pride of the Artois. At Ypres the Hun has left himself no