

darkness go towards any glimmer of light, for warmth of soul as well as of body.

A woman came up a flight of stone steps from a vaulted cellar and stared at me, and said, "Good day. Do you look for anything?"

I said, "I look only into your cellar. It is strange to find you living here. All alone—perhaps."

"It is no longer strange to me. I have been here, as you say, alone, all through the war, since the day of the first bombardment. That was on October 6, 1914. Before then I was not alone. I was married. But my husband was killed over there—you see the place where the shell fell. Since then I am alone."

For two years and two months she and other women of Arras—one came now to stand by her side and nod at her tale—have lived below ground, coming up for light and air when there is a spell of such silence as I had listened to, and going down to the dark vaults when a German "crump" smashes through another roof, or when German gas steals through the streets with the foul breath of death.

I asked her about the Kaiser's offer of peace. What did she think of that? I wondered what her answer would be—this woman imprisoned in darkness, hiding under daily bombardments, alone in the abomination of desolation. It was strange how quickly she was caught on fire by a sudden passion. All the tranquillity of her face changed, and there were burning sparks in her eyes. She was like a woman of the Revolution, and her laughter, for she began her answer with a laugh, was shrill and fierce.

"Peace! William offers peace, you say? Bah! It is nothing but humbug [*la blague*]. It is a trap which he sets at our feet to catch us. It is a lie."

She grasped my arm, and with her other hand pointed to the ruins over the way, to the chaos of old houses, once very stately and noble, where her friends lived before the fires of hell came.

"The Germans did that to us. They are doing it now. But it is not enough. What they have done to Arras they want to do to France—to smash the nation to the dust, to break the spirit of our race as they have broken all things here. They wish to deceive us to our further ruin. There will be no peace until Germany herself is laid in ashes, and her cities destroyed like Arras is destroyed, and her women left alone, with only the