

THE CARAVANERS

special pride, but in four cases out of the five it was pigs, and while I was away Edelgard sat on the lawn or the terrace or wherever the family usually sat (only one had a terrace) and conversed on subjects interesting to women-folk, such as Clothilde and Hermann and I know not what; then, after having thoroughly exhausted the pigs and been in my turn thoroughly exhausted by them, for naturally a Prussian officer on active service cannot be expected to take the same interest in these creatures so long as they are raw as a man does who devotes his life to them, we rejoined the ladies and strolled in the lighter talk suited to our listeners about the grounds, endeavouring with our handkerchiefs to drive away the mosquitoes, till summoned to supper; and after supper, which usually consisted of one excellent hot dish and a variety of cold ones, preceded by *bouillon* in cups and followed by some elegant sweet and beautiful fruit (except at Frau von Eckthum's, our local young widow's, where it was a regular dinner of six or seven courses, she being what is known as ultra-modern, her sister having married an Englishman), after supper, I repeat, having sat a while smoking on the lawn or terrace drinking coffee and liqueurs and secretly congratulating ourselves on not having in our town to live with so many and such hungry mosquitoes, we took our leave and drove back