

EVERY LITTLE BIT HELPS

But when we reached the dining room fresh difficulties arose. To begin with, Hoskins, who is usually the pink of exactitude in such important matters, had misread my plan for the seating, and by the most unfortunate error Mr. Willy was placed on the other side of Miss Esmeralda. This brought Captain Tugwell directly opposite, though still beside Marjorie. Thank heaven! Dear Mrs. DeWynt can never blame me for having blundered there!

At first things went really better than might have been expected. Miss Esmeralda, though not in the least abashed by her surroundings, was frankly absorbed with interest in them. There was no question but that the entourage was an entirely unfamiliar one, and her curious, indefinable eyes moved deliberately from object to object. Hoskins and the second man, Brent, seemed particularly to fascinate her, and during the *hors d'œuvre* I do believe she followed their every movement.

Because of the war we were serving