

from there to the Gare St. Lazaire, it seemed to me that widows, and nothing but widows, crowded the streets!

My next impression was of soldiers everywhere, and such poor, smashed-up, mutilated soldiers! At one corner we passed three blind Zouaves, arm in arm and all as cheerful as possible, while a man in uniform conducted them across the street.

I was particularly struck by the cheerfulness of the soldiers and their wives. One never heard a grumble nor a murmur. The French trains are peculiarly built, the third-class carriages being overhead and reached by a small outside iron stairway. Up this little stairway the soldiers swarmed, their packs or "sacs" on their backs, all laughing and humming snatches of popular songs. In the little open-air carriages there they sat, all as happy as possible.

The train service has been, of course, much curtailed, and as the trains are often commandeered altogether for military purposes, one must take one's chance. The military authorities have first right to the trains, and whenever the authorities want them for transport purposes they immediately get them.

#### Population Decreased

The population of Paris has been tremendously decreased, since every man between the ages of 18 and 45 must go off to fight. The expenses of living have gone up correspondingly, and the shop people are not doing anything like their former trade. Even where orders do come in, they have not the men to execute the orders, and I have spoken with several tradesmen who have been entirely ruined, not through lack of orders, but through lack of men to carry them out. It is practically impossible to hire labor.

The motorbuses have entirely disappeared from the streets of Paris! They are all used for military purposes, and not a single one remains. The car service, too, leaves much to be desired. One has to wait a very long time to get a car anywhere. Taxis abound, although last September, just before the Germans were turned on the Marne, all the taxis were commandeered by the military authorities, and 10,000 troops taken in them to the battlefield. For a whole week Paris was without a single taxi!

The street scenes here are very different from those in London. There are no recruiting notices, for instance, for where there is conscription recruiting notices are unnecessary. Theatres are all closed, with the exception of a few benefit performances for the wounded, and the little street cafes close at 9, while the restaurants close at 10. The change here is very marked, for formerly there was no real time limit, and one could sit till the "wee sma' hours" at these delightful little tables on the pavement and watch the night-life of the gay Parisians in all its flood tide.

#### Women in Men's Places

The women, of course, have bravely stepped into the places of the men. All the tramcar conductors are women, and very odd do they look in their enormous black alpaca aprons and small black caps of the "Glenarry" variety. They are exceedingly businesslike, all the

same, and hustle the passengers in and out with the greatest possible energy. The French rendering of "Step lively, please," is always on their lips, together with a weird kind of whistle which gives forth a wailing sound, such as a cat might utter in its death agony, and which has a peculiarly disturbing effect on the nerves the first time one hears it! For the sum of three francs and 50 centimes per day, or about 70 cents in American money, these women work tirelessly for 10 hours. The work is hard and poorly paid, but they seem to enjoy it.

I chatted with several of them, and they all remarked that they were happy in being strong enough to fill the places of their men. Most of them were married women with husbands at the front. One young woman on the Madeleine route had lost two husbands in the war! "My first husband was killed last September," she informed me, "and I married again but six weeks ago. Now I learn that he, too, is killed."

The one topic of conversation in Paris is of course "la guerre." From morning till night one hears nothing else.

The ancient cab drivers, with their high hats of white patent leather, their bright blue long-tailed coats and their scarlet waistcoats, present a curious picture. Many of them wear loose smocks, such as artists affect, of pale blue linen, and their flowing beards and curled mustaches give even the middle-aged ones a venerable look.

It seems a mystery that even the young Frenchmen should cultivate long, sweeping beards. Perhaps they imagine that it gives them added dignity. Half the French army seem to be bearded men, and all aim at the cultivation of fierce mustaches.

"Yes, they wish to return to the front," they all declared. "Our wounds are getting better and our comrades need us!" There was not a murmur or a grumble from any of them. It was a lesson in patriotism.

The forest of St. Germain lay steeped in the evening sunlight. Away at our feet stretched 30 miles of the magnificent Seine valley, with its peaceful orchards and its winding river. Far on the horizon rose the dim outlines of the Eiffel Tower and the outbuildings of Paris. The wonderful old forest of Marly stretched for miles up a mile to the right. And the only sound to break the solemn silence was the tinkling of the cowbells as the little "gamins" drove them home through the shadows of the forest to be milked.

In that quiet evening hour it seemed impossible to believe that in a space of less than one and a half hours an automobile could take one to the bloodiest of battlefields. Wars and rumors of wars seemed unthinkable in such a place. For the forest of St. Germain is a veritable sanctuary for solitude and peace. But when I turned once more to my wounded companions and saw them with their faces mutilated beyond all description, so that one shuddered to look at the poor fellows, it was not hard to realize that war was somewhere very near—and, above all, very terrible!



Village Clergyman: "Can I help you at all?"  
 Artilleryman: "Yes, Sir, you can."  
 Clergyman: "What shall I do, then?"  
 Artilleryman: "Well, Sir, if you wouldn't mind going a bit further up the street the horses will understand the language better."

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