

emotion of any of them. And they are in deadly earnest to-night.

Suddenly a diversion occurs ; a motor-car has stopped at the door and a young officer, muddied from head to foot, has entered the café. It is whispered, guessed, believed in a breath that he is from the front. He is surrounded in a moment and a hundred questions are put to him. He cannot answer all of them manifestly, and so he smiles, the slow smile of his race which has always something of the sorrowful in its gaiety.—“ From the front, yes, from Liège. . . . No, Liège still holds and the slaughter goes on merrily enough. . . . The stacks of German dead mount up . . . so. . . . (He raised his hand in a quick gesture full of complacency.) The guns are not yet satisfied, and the banquet is not yet over. . . . ”

He fights his way through the crowd towards the back of the room where are some empty tables. He is still greatly good-natured but tired evidently. The crowd surges behind him still asking him questions. He seats himself with legs extended ; the glint of his spurs, where the mud has spared them, is like a beacon to the women. They surround him ; some of the bolder throw their arms round his neck and one of them kisses him to his confusion. A woman's voice is heard singing the first lines of the Brabançonne, and instantly the whole company begins to sing. The young knight joins himself in what is of the nature of an accolade. Then people from the street crowd in to find out what is the matter, and the door becomes blocked with a mass of people which extends right out into the roadway as though some monster were spewing out human beings from its extended jaws. All are singing and waving hats and hand-