



The Answer.

BY L. D. MILNER.

I prayed, "God keep him safe". He was so young.
That fair-haired boy of mine;
So eager in the cause—filled with desire
To join the fighting line,
And every morn' I prayed, and every eve
I said, "Keep safe my boy;"
And, never doubting Him who answers prayer,
I sang of faith and joy.

A message came that burned upon my brain
In words of living fire;
I prayed, "God keep him safe"—"Killed while in action,"
Came the answering wire.
But while my heart cried out there came a voice,
So gentle it brought rest,
"Thou prayed 'God keep him safe'—I've kept him safe,
He is with Me.—'t is best."

Letters From Europe.

(FROM HELEN'S DIARY.)

Berne, Switz., May 7, 1918.

BERNE again!
Berne crammed with people, and full of dust, and rumors!
Berne so crowded that it is almost impossible to get a room. Guests in hotels have been obliged to sleep in the public parlors, and even in the bathrooms. It is still more difficult to procure accommodation in the pensions as the rates are lower and the guests more or less permanent. One must apply weeks and even months in advance in order to get a room in a pension and then be satisfied with anything. These are not days of selection; they are days of take-what-you-can-get and be thankful for it. Many of the foreign diplomats are put to great inconvenience in finding homes for their families owing to the lack of suitable apartments and houses in Berne, and the exorbitant rents demanded. Many people have been obliged to find accommodation out of town in the villages roundabout,—some have even gone as far away as Thun—an hour's ride by train, so that their children could attend the schools there.

The price of living in Berne has enormously increased in the last year. At a rough guess I should say it had almost doubled, and prices are still soaring, like kites on a windy day. Clothing is very expensive and materials shoddy. Ready-made clothing is especially unsatisfactory; at the first wearing the buttons pop off, the seams burst, and the wearer, naturally, flies into a righteous wrath. Shoes! even now they are a luxury. New ones suggest untold wealth on the part of the possessor; old ones are treated with great tenderness and respect, and everything possible is done to prolong their days of usefulness. Owing to the fabulous prices demanded for new shoes the war-sandal has made its appearance and is almost exclusively worn now by the children of the poorer classes. It has a wooden sole, leather straps, and is jointed under the instep. Five active children in sandals clattering about on a stone pavement make more noise than a regiment of Swiss soldiers. One almost needs cotton in the ears when prowling about the streets in the poorer districts, so nerve-racking is the noise.

Stockings—thin, cotton, cobwebby things cost about a dollar, and lead a brief and troubled existence. They are darned and darned with needles and with tongues.

In spite of the high price of foodstuffs, the tea-rooms of Berne are crowded every afternoon—except one day in the week when they are all closed. A "portion" of tea now costs one franc (it used to be

just half that amount), and cakes the size of a postage stamp, and not much thicker, cost 25 centimes.

Apart from the crowded condition of the city, the high cost of living, the noise, the dust and the racket, there is a new feature of life in Berne which adds to the general unpleasantness, and that is the vigilance of the police. Now that they have full control of all the foreigners in Switzerland, new rules and regulations are cropping up all the time. Berne being the capital the rules are particularly rigid.

All strangers arriving in Berné from a foreign country must report at the police station within 24 hours. Those coming from other parts of Switzerland are allowed eight days grace. At the police station they must show their identity papers and give any information required, including their reasons for being in Berne.

The police station is a most unpleasant place. It is always full of people, one has to wait an interminable time, and there isn't a chair on which to flop.

The day I reported I was the only lady in the line. There were twenty or thirty men, of all sorts and conditions from shabby workmen to natty parlor ornaments. The man immediately behind me looked like a Russian Bolshevik and had the unpleasant odor of the unwashed. But that he had aspirations in the line of cleanliness was evident for he spent the waiting time manicuring his nails, an operation that seemed to necessitate keeping his mouth open and breathing hard. The man ahead of me was a florid-faced German.

"Where are you from?" asked the police official.
"Stuttgart."
"Where are you going?"
"To Locarno."
"What are you here for?"
"My health."
"How long do you expect to remain?"
"Five days."



Scene on the Principal Street of Berne.

Notice the old woman sawing wood.

Near the top of the line I caught occasional glimpses of the back of a head that seemed to have an old familiar look.

Where had I seen it before?
I couldn't remember. But somehow the sight of it seemed to stir things up in my mind—pictures, architecture, music, the crashing of thunder—Ah, Fribourg! Could it be the man of the Fribourg episode?

I craned my neck to get a better view—unsuccessfully. But in a few minutes he passed out of the room and I saw him quite distinctly.

It was the same man.
Fortunately (or unfortunately, I don't know yet which) he did not see me.

I wonder if I will run across him again while I am here!

One is apt to meet anybody in Berne.

RUMORS are as thick in Berne as flies around a honey-pot in July. There are so many disquieting reports that one feels as if he were living on top of a volcano that might at any moment begin to belch revolutions there is one consoling feature—the rumors are so contradictory that one begins to doubt them all. Still, they make one very uneasy. The last and most sensational is that all foreigners who are not in Switzerland for some special purpose must leave the country. Whether this rumor is true or not I cannot say, but this I do know that the expulsion process has already started in Berne, that the police are sending people out of the city every day, not only undesirable and refractory, but also nice, respectable people who have lived here many years. Various reasons are advanced to account for these stringent measures on the part of the Swiss police. It is said they want to rid Berne of the idle population and make room for the people who are obliged to live in the city; it is said it is on account of the food problem; it is said it is just a scheme to drive the floating population out of Berne and fill up the empty hotels in other towns. Whatever the real reason may be there is certainly an exodus, and everybody is asking, what next?

May 27th.

IF any person thinks it is easy to get a Bread Card in Berne I would like to undeceive him.

I got one to-day and I know all about it. I feel as if I had been in a street riot. It is the first time I have applied personally for a B. C. as it is customary in hotels for the Concierge to attend to the renewal of the Cards for all the guests. This is usually done a few days before the expiration of the month, as new Cards are issued each month.

To-day the hotel manager called for the cards.

station here and get an order from the re As the time is short I advise you to go to the police station."

So, I went, armed with my *Permis de Séjour*. Although I got there early, the corner of the room reserved for applicants was packed. This corner is fenced off from the rest of the room by a high wooden railing. As there isn't a place to sit down one has to stand around with a watchful eye and wedge into the first promising opening near the railing. This achieved you cling desperately to your position, advancing little by little till near enough to reach out and clutch the railing to which you anchor yourself with both hands. There you remain till the Mighty-Personage on the other side deigns to notice you. This he does, apparently, quite at random.

It took me half an hour to get to the "front", and another half hour to catch his eye.

When I explained my predicament, he looked at me critically, examined my *Permis de Séjour*, asked me some questions yawned, strolled across the room, consulted a big book, yawned again, called over a few questions to me, conferred with a man at a desk, wrote something in German on my *Permis de Séjour*, gave it back to me and charged me fifty centimes—for what, I don't know. The ways of Swiss officials are most mysterious.

Then I went in search of the Bread Bureau which was a couple of blocks away on the third floor of a school building. It was a hot, dusty, windy day, and the air was full of fluffy stuff from the trees that brought on sneezing fits. The doors on both sides of the building were open, so that every few minutes whirlwinds of dust and fluff would fill the hall to suffocation. I looked at the crowd on the stairs, then at my watch, and decided to postpone the struggle till after luncheon.

I returned before the opening hour and found the stairs just the same as when I left, so there was nothing to do but join the procession. Each step accommodated six people. It took nearly an hour to get to the third story. There, a police guard was stationed to keep the crowd in check. Every twenty minutes or so a bunch of people would be let into the hall where the cards were being distributed. As soon as the door was opened all was confusion and rush and riot. I seemed to be punched by twenty-five sharp elbows at the same time. My feet were trampled on, I was jostled and pushed till I gasped for breath. Inside the room it was not much better. Every person dashed frantically towards the tables where the tickets were given out. No sooner did I get a place than I was roughly shouldered out of it. I began to despair of ever getting a B. C. Visions of a breadless June rose before me. Then I plucked up courage for another attempt, and was just endeavoring to wedge myself in beside a large, fat woman, when she moved away and I slid into the opening.

That was luck.

I came away from that table with a Bread Card, a Fat Card, a Cheese Card, and a burning desire to punch somebody.

When I emerged from the building I bore the marks of conflict. My hair was stringing over my face, my hat on one ear, my sleeve ripped at the shoulder, and my jacket pocket half off (it caught on a man's cane). One such experience is enough for me. Hereafter the Concierge may take my cards.

THE warm weather of the last few weeks has brought out summer toilettes in great profusion. The Bernese belles are parading the streets in the gauziest of neckless, almost-sleeve-less robes, whose brevity leaves nothing to the imagination regarding ankles. To make up for this scantiness of attire, hats are large and floppy and vivid. I have