

for any one to know that we needed all these things. Our lack was notorious. We sent a much disinfected, carbolic-smelling round robin of thanks to "James W. Beckett, Junior," son of the western railway king.

As I drove to the *gare* of St. Raphael, I thought of the kind boys who had helped our poor *poilus*, and especially of James Beckett. Whether he were still at the aviation camp, or had finished his training and gone to the front, I didn't know: but I wafted a blessing to our benefactor. I little dreamed then of the unforgivable injury I was fated to do him! You see, Padre, I use the word "*fated*." That's because I've turned coward. I try to pretend that fate has been too strong for me. But down deep I know you were right when you said, "Our characters carve our fate."

It was a long journey from the south to the north, where Brian was, for in war-days trains do what they like and what nobody else likes. I travelled for three days and nights, and when I came to my journey's end, instead of Brian being dead as I'd seen him in a hundred hideous dreams, the doctors held out hope that he might live. They told me this to give me courage, before they broke the news that he would be blind. I suppose they thought I'd be so thankful to keep my brother at any price, that I should hardly feel the shock. But I wasn't thankful. I wasn't! The price seemed too big. I judged Brian by myself—Brian, who so worshipped beauty that I used to call him "Phidias!" I was sure he would rather have gone out of this world whose face he'd loved, than stay in it without eyes for its radiant smile. But there I made a great mistake. Brian was