

WAR-TIME HEROINES

OCTOBER the third was set apart for the consideration of the life and death of Edith Cavell in the public and high schools of Ontario. It is proposed to erect a statue to the martyred nurse, and all the school children were invited to contribute something, no matter how little. On the same day a band of earnest workers set forth to canvass all Toronto for subscriptions for the Edith Cavell Memorial Nurses' Home in connection with the Western Hospital, and the sum of \$25,000 was raised, so the name of this heroic woman will be perpetuated both by an artistic memorial, and by one that shall be of great permanent value to the profession to which she belonged. Edith Cavell was a woman imbued with the spirit of true patriotism, who did noble work for her country outside the lines of duty. But it is through her tragic death rather than her heroic deeds that she has gained undying fame. In the remote corners of the Empire she has stimulated recruiting amongst men, roused women to patriotic labour, and caused money to pour into coffers for patriotic purposes.

WAR has produced many heroines whose worth can be judged neither by the record of their deeds or by the medals they have received. In France to-day it is said that every woman is a heroine and every other man a hero. Some of the heroines are actresses—as well, singers, women of letters, society leaders, physicians, nuns. But there are many others of whom it is said: "She is just a woman." Few women are permitted to play a great part in war—Joan of Arc is without a parallel in history,—but in France it is more common to find women publicly recognized for their heroic deeds. Since Napoleon founded the Cross of the Legion of Honour a score or more women have been decorated for personal bravery in warfare. He himself decorated at least seven, the chief of whom was "Sister Martha," who was honoured for her devotion to the sick and wounded, in the care of whom she risked her life constantly.

SELDOM do we find instances of British women being decorated for valour on the battlefield, for the simple reason that opportunity for deeds which would earn for them the Victoria Cross are very few, and it is only since June of this year that the Military Medal may be, on the special recommendation of the commander-in-chief in the field, awarded to women, whether British subjects or foreign persons, who have shown bravery and devotion under fire.

A GERMAN woman warrior is leading a force of 100 to 200 native troops in East Africa against the Allies without the assistance of any other European. She is known as Bibi Sacharini, a name which has been given her by the natives who say she is the widow of a commandant, and grief-stricken over the death of her husband she has sworn to be avenged. She is described as a big woman with flaxen hair, who rides astride, armed to the teeth, is a splendid marksman and has wonderful control over her native followers.

A MONG the names which will be made immortal by the present war is that of Mira Michaelovna Ivanova. This spirited woman was serving as a nurse under her brother, who was regimental surgeon. She was tending the wounded in the thick of

battle, amid an increasing hail of rifle and machine gun bullets. Her brother and the regimental officers urged her to seek shelter but in vain. At last all the officers of the company to which she was attached had fallen and the men were losing heart and giving way. Quickly realizing the critical nature of the moment, the heroic nurse rallied round her the remnants of the company, and, charging at their head, captured the enemy's trench. Unhappily, she was struck by a bullet, and died shortly afterwards.

DEEDS like that make our hearts burn with admiration, sometimes mixed with envy that such opportunities for service do not fall to our lot. Yet there is work for each of us to do, and everyone has a sphere of influence, how great we never know. Here is an attempt to sketch the work that one woman belonging to a neutral nation, has been able to accomplish for the cause of the Allies.

MISS EDITH MAY, a graduate of Wellesley College, conducted a successful travelling school

Miss Edith May, Inspector of the French Wounded Emergency Hospitals.



Chasseurs Alpins, or "Blue Devils," just back from Verdun for a week. Each has medals for bravery. The photo is taken by Miss May, on a pass 7,000 feet high, which she has to cross to reach her district.



for girls on the continent. When war broke out she volunteered to do hospital work for the Allies, and became officially connected as hospital inspector with the French Wounded Emergency Fund Society, a Government organization, which has its headquarters at 44 Lowndes Square, London, England. Her first route was to Brittany, where she found the hospitals for the most part in a desperate condition. Moved by pity she wrote home a most vivid description of the great need and suffering, and copies of this letter were circulated amongst her friends, and many were fired with a desire to help. Branches of the Society were formed, bazaars and concerts were organized to help the Brittany hospitals, and money flowed into the treasury. Extracts from her letters were published in "The Outlook" under the title of "War Letters of an American Woman," and as a direct result of the appeal they contained, the fund received over \$1,500. Through her personal appeal to friends Miss May received an equal amount. One of these friends lives in Toronto, and she, too, received a most interesting letter telling in vivid language of their great need. Extracts were published in the local papers, and Canadians showed their ready sympathy in most practical ways. "The Brittany Tea Rooms" was a direct result, and there a considerable sum was raised for the fund. Working parties organized and Churches in both town and country undertook to supply the Fund with hospital dressings. Some of the workers took copies of the letter to summer resorts, and through its appeal other bands were organized, and those who worked at the seashore promised to form a branch

in their home town. And so as a result of a few letters the interest has spread throughout the Western continent. "Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth."

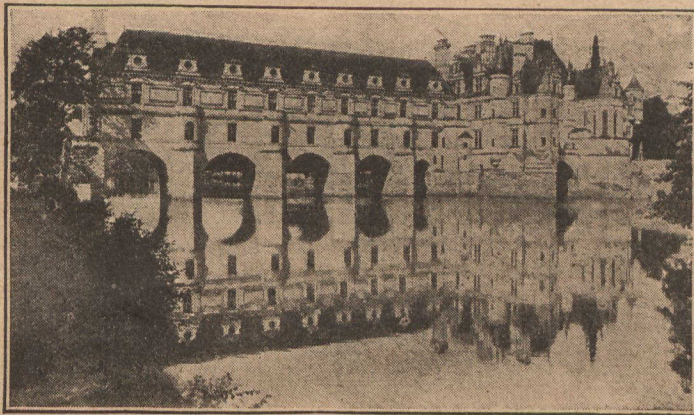
AND so there comes from Miss May a personal letter to her friend in Toronto who allows us to publish it in part:

Grenoble, France.

When I say that I have written 134 letters in this last month, you will know that I have been busy! But I have been busier than ever in another way, because my little English chauffeuse was called back to England in June, and no other has been sent me. Having tried to visit hospitals by train and having wasted an infinite amount of time and patience, I finally passed the examination to drive a motor myself and received my "brevet" from the French Government. This enabled me to be much more independent, since chauffeurs in France are not now to be had for the money. But it has been lonely and rather hard work.

My new region is very large, far larger than Brittany as regards the numbers of hospitals. The territory, too, is difficult to visit while being at the same time wonderfully picturesque. But often I have to retrace my route by scores of kilometres because impassable mountains are

in my way, and it is up the far valleys that one finds the little towns and struggling hospitals. The larger places, unless they be manufacturing towns, with poor populations, can always take care of their own hospitals. But, with some exceptions, few of the hospitals in Brittany have equalled in poverty those I have found in my new region. Brittany is, in a sense, easy of access from England, and even from America. This region, in its highest parts, is not. Then, too, the men from Verdun come directly



The Chateau of Clemenceaux, now a Red Cross Hospital.

here in a few hours to the large hospitals, and are evacuated into the smaller. At Annecy we felt the rumble of the great guns at the front! Its nearness makes every hospital full, every convent, and school house, and empty hall, every disused factory with bare lofts, and factories still running, whose machinery on the ground floor shakes the beds above! The summer-time and the lovely gardens have hidden the bleakness and bareness I saw in Brittany, but the hot weather has accentuated the lack of water, in many cases, and the flies.

In many villages I have been the first visitor since the war. You can imagine how happy it has made me to discover and help something all my own! But you can't begin to imagine the warmth of the welcome I have had everywhere, the charming little attentions, the sincere and almost embarrassing gratitude. It is unforgettable. So many kind people have continued to write me that I have found my French correspondence quite beyond me, but it has been a glowing tribute to French warmth of heart. My going about alone has given me some wonderfully interesting experiences and conversations with people of all classes. I have never before known any French people of the "Provinces," and I find them wonderfully serious, sympathetic and universally intelligent. I have, with some of the money sent me from America, more or less "adopted" certain little ambulances, and the letters I have received from the ordinary and everyday "Poilu," in return for some slight gift, have been a constant source of surprise to me. Their way of expressing themselves has been so intelligent and even so delicate. To me it is quite remarkable. But then the whole French nation has proved itself to be so remarkably other than what all the world thought, that I realize we knew only the veneer, and much of that was imported, not French! I am so glad that France has come into her own again, her heroism deserves it. My whole winter has been one series of revelations. I have never before known what heroism means, I think, nor self-sacrifice.

But Canada is wonderful, too, so generous, so self-sacrificing. She has been a model before all the world. How often I hope that this may be the last war of the world, and that the courage and heroism of the future may be turned into other channels. But not until Belgium has come into her own again, and Poland, and all the Allies! The worst is over, thank God, and now we almost look victory in the face! There were moments before Verdun when I could hardly read the papers and yet could not keep from buying them.

I think you are a marvel to have raised so much money. Thank you for naming the oak after me! Someone wanted to dedicate a poem against the Kaiser to me recently! I am becoming famous. Do write me again, letters encourage so much!

Gratefully yours, **EDITH MAY.**
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