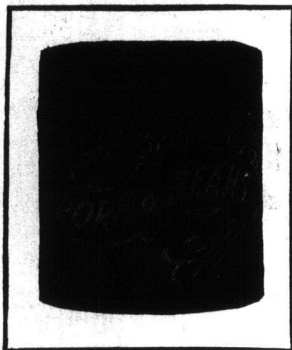


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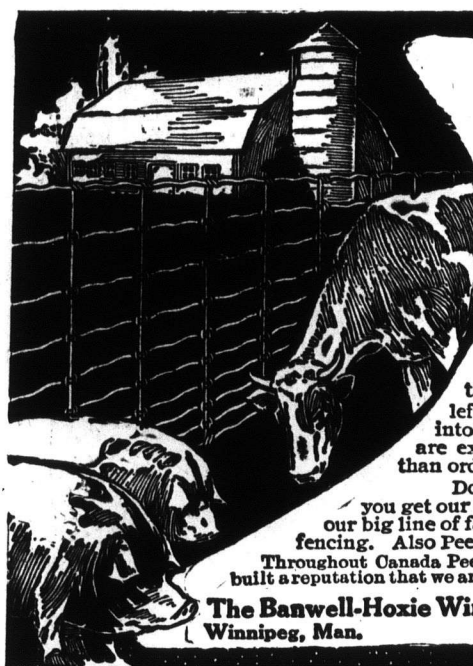
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ing of the crops, the gathering of the apples and pears from the orchard. Her dairy and her poultry, together with her household cares, kept her busy and she worked with an energy that exhausted her body and gave her little time for reflection.

When the harvest was in and big piles of brushwood had been gathered in the oven-house for winter use, Nannie determined to go to the scene of the war. She had heard how many women had gone to the hospital to help, and besides, she might be near Alanik.

Accordingly, having arranged with the neighbors to look after the little farm, she left Brittany. She had decided to go to Belgium as there, she heard, the need was greatest. It was not an easy matter, especially in this time of stress for the little woman to reach one of the large hospitals in Belgium, but love surmounts all obstacles and reach it she did. Then it was another difficult matter to gain permission to stay, for only an efficient body of women could be maintained. Finally, however, touched by Nannie's earnest appeal to be allowed to do any kind of work, the matron consented to allow her to remain.

It was not long before Nannie's thoughtfulness and usefulness won her many friends among the nurses.

Then, one day, the town in which was the hospital, was besieged. Shells burst over the homes destroying and killing the hapless inmates. Miraculously the hospital escaped. A bomb, however, falling into the courtyard, worked awful destruction. The debris completely covered the well and no water was to be had. Across the street was a convent which was still unharmed.

When Nannie discovered that water was needed, she quickly caught up two pails and sped across to the convent well. She had filled her pails and was about to return, when the tramp of soldiery fell on her ears. The oncoming soldiers were near, so she decided to wait until they passed. As they came closer, she peeped out through the little opening in the gate. Oh joy! they were French soldiers! This she knew from their red and blue uniforms. Then her eye fell upon the officer at their head and she caught her breath. It was Alanik, oh joy! she would rush out and—

Already her hand had lifted the latch. Then, as suddenly, it dropped. Was she a woman of France to disgrace her husband by her weakness? Not yet could she look into his dear face and hear the voice she loved so well.

Mechanically she picked up her pails and slowly returned to the hospital. Having safely delivered the precious water, she was seized by an irresistible impulse to follow that column, at whose head was her own Alanik, and turning she sped up the street. Masses of ruins barred her way, shells burst overhead; but quite unharmed she followed the French soldiers. Near the edge of the town they stopped and entered a house. Nannie crept into a deserted house opposite. She would watch. No doubt, an opportunity would present itself to enable her to speak to Alanik.

The room in which she found herself was large and richly furnished.

Presently when she had recovered from her breathlessness, she heard voices. She listened intently. They were men's voices and she distinguished German words. The knowledge filled her with dismay. She must escape at once. Tales of the atrocities committed on helpless women had already reached her ears, and she was terrified.

But, before she could leave the room, cautious steps were heard approaching. As they drew near, Nannie's eyes searched wildly for a place of concealment. The windows were deep and hung with heavy curtains. Into one of these she climbed and drew close the curtains. Soon, a number of German soldiers entered the room. They talked earnestly. Through a hole in the curtain she saw them pointing to the house opposite, the one which sheltered the French soldiers.

Then a panic seized Nannie. Now, that the Germans knew of the presence of the French, danger threatened Alanik! When they left the room she would steal out and warn him. But the moments passed and the enemy showed no intention of quitting the room. On the contrary, they seemed to be preparing to

stay. They were doubtless waiting for darkness to aid their plans.

Suddenly a thought struck her. Cautiously she drew aside the blind. It was as she surmised; the window opened on the street and was only about three feet from the ground. Her little foot shot out, shattering the glass.

She had squeezed through and was already half-way across the street when a shot rang out. But Nannie dashed on unharmed. Another shot followed and she fell in a limp heap. But already the French were pouring from the house. A sharp encounter followed, which resulted in a number of Germans being killed. The remainder were taken prisoners.

Nannie was tenderly lifted up. Blood was flowing from a wound in her back. "Alanik, Alanik," she gasped in a tone of frenzied anxiety.

A strong arm supported her and her eyes looked into those of Alanik himself. For a moment he was quite dazed, but as reality was borne in upon his mind "Nannie, Nannie," he cried chokingly and gathered her closely into his arms.

"Alanik," she whispered, "kiss me, my husband." His bearded lips met her white ones in a long kiss. "Little one," he spoke, "How came you here? I thought you safe in Brittany."

Then suddenly the paleness of her face struck him. Inarticulate words, broken phrases burst from him, as he pressed her convulsively to his breast. Nannie smiled happily. "I came to help," she murmured wearily, "I saw you pass, I wanted to warn you."

"God, Oh God," he sobbed. A shell whined through the air. There was a deafening detonation. The soldiers ran wildly from the spot.

When at last all was quiet again, the French soldiers crept back. Under a pile of debris they found Alanik and Nannie. She was still clasped in his arms. Both still breathed. As quickly as possible they were borne back to the hospital. Here it was found that although both had sustained serious injuries, yet there was a chance of their recovery.

Six months later Alanik and Nannie sat on the vine-shaded porch of the little home in Brittany. They were pale and weak, but the sun, sinking behind the far hills, smiled a promise of hope, and life and love. Reading with her the promise, his arm stole about her waist.

"You love me Nannie?" he whispered.

"Next to La Belle France," she whispered back.

"Ah, that is truly enough," he smiled. And again their eyes turned to the sunset.

The Benefits of Forced Simplicity

Several years ago a woman was on the verge of nervous prostration, due to the cares of her big house and the troubles caused by incompetent help. She had woman after woman who stayed a week or two and then departed, leaving the care of the house and family on the hands of the wife and mother. Finally the doctor ordered her to take a month's vacation, and she determined to simplify matters as much as possible while she was away. To this end the rooms were stripped of all useless ornaments, the food was cut down to the minimum of plain, wholesome supplies, the entertaining was of the simplest character, and the cleaning that was necessary was done by outside helpers. The mistress acknowledged that it was a makeshift, and apologized to her family profusely, but something had to be done.

Any one who has tried the experiment knows what happened. That family was literally forced into such good health, good temper, serenity and quiet that it never wanted to go back to the old way. The big, burdensome house was sold and a smaller one taken. The smaller house lacked the convenience, but there was nothing useless in and about the rooms. The whole effect was restful and delightful, while the saving in money was remarkable. The family doctor was no longer a frequent caller, and the temper of the family became so improved that "nerves" were rarely spoken of in that home. But the most remarkable thing was that a competent, good-tempered woman, seeing the state of things, applied for a place as domestic. The mistress had the good sense to adhere to the simple methods of living, and the domestic is with her to this day.