

A GREAT ARTILLERY PHOTOGRAPH



A great painter might have made this picture, which as an epic rivals any of the fabulous labours of Hercules. These Russian sappers and gunners are hauling a heavy field cannon over a specially built track on to a temporary platform built of tree-trunks and pine-wood slabs. The gun is mounted on two sets of wheels, big wheels running on the ground, low truck wheels operating on railway tracks. It was not built for gasoline traction, and is not a siege gun. It is a field-piece capable of transportation anywhere, even over the swamps of Russia. The only problem seems to be getting men enough around the gun to move it. And this picture of moving a great Russian gun, taken in Poland, is one of the great epical photographs of the war.

WAR PICTURES

By G. WARD PRICE

In London Daily Mail

IT is often the trivial things that bring out the bitterness of war.

A party of French soldiers, on their way from hospital to a convalescent home, were waiting the other day in Creil Station for the train.

Some, with arms hung in neat white slings, still had the healthy flush of face which a year's soldiering in all weathers had given them. Those whose greater injuries had kept them for months in sickly smelling wards were pale and haggard, and their trench-stained blue uniforms hung meagrely upon their shrunken frames.

A gruff sergeant was calling the roll, checking each name on the tally as its owner rose from the row of forms where the convalescents were sitting and crossed over to the other side of the room.

"Durand," he called.

"Here, sergeant," was the answer, as a young man, walking almost buoyantly, despite his shattered arm, rose from the little group.

"Legrand."

"Here, sergeant," and the full-bearded father of a family, happy to have escaped with what the French soldier has learned to call a "good wound," followed him.

"Fagot."

"Here, sergeant." The reply came from a broad-shouldered fellow sitting by the table. He did not rise like the others, however, but stayed seated.

"Stand up, man," exclaimed the sergeant, testily.

"But—"

"Don't argue. Stand up!" shouted the sergeant.

The convalescent put one hand on the table by his side and the other on the shoulder of the man sitting next to him. Then he straightened his arms with an effort, so as to raise his body in the air, and there it hung, and the sergeant and everyone in the room could see that the soldier had no legs, only two stumps cut off just below the thigh. Moreover, on the broad chest of this maimed ruin of a man were the yellow ribbon of the French Military Medal and the crimson ribbon of the Legion of Honour, the first of which, especially, means that you are lucky to have lived to wear it.

The sergeant stopped short in his tally-keeping. He drew himself up and saluted with a characteristic French gesture. "Pardon, my brave fellow," he said. "I did not know."

The children playing in the beautiful gardens of the Champs Elysees are always the prettiest sight in Paris. That stretch, only a few hundred yards long, of carefully tended flower-beds and dainty lawns hidden among the trees is in summer the most charming part of the most beautiful capital in Europe.

The little girls, dressed as if they were beautiful big dolls, are the most exquisite of all the flowers in the gardens. Their games and make-believes under the trees go on just as they always did. The old women who run the tiny roundabouts and swings, the little boys who lead the goat-carriages, have known no falling-off in their prosperity since the war began. Silvery squeals of laughter, the flashing of sturdy little white legs over skipping-ropes, scamperings and ball-catching, and the immemorial Punch and Judy at the corner are just as vigorously carried on as if the Germans were thousands of miles away instead of only sixty.

But one change has indeed come, though very likely the children have not noticed it.

To the sparkle of their pretty frocks and merry little faces there has grown up gradually, and deepening day by day, a sombre background of black. And the children, when they stop for a moment out of breath with their play, often wonder why it is that their mothers or their nurses who used to join so willingly in their games now wear those ugly clothes and stay sitting on their chairs under the trees, sometimes crying quietly when they think that no one sees them.

THE tourist pilgrimage to the battlefields, which will go on all our time, and for many years after, has already begun. You can take the train to Meaux from Paris in the morning, and from there, with a permit that the officer at Meaux station gives you, one may take a carriage and drive round all the afternoon over the country where some of the fiercest and most important fighting of the war occurred, now nearly a year ago.

Except for one thing you would hardly know that the peace of this rich land had ever been so desperately disturbed. But that solitary sign is grim and significant enough. Everywhere among the ripe corn stand the crosses that mark the places where men fell for France and where they were hastily buried—white crosses for the French; black posts

with a lozenge-shaped mark on them for the German dead. Fields that are heavy with the fruit of the earth's eternal reproduction are dotted thickly with these marks of man's destruction.

Mile after mile has its soldiers' graves scattered here, clustering thickly there, on the slopes of the hills, in the heart of the valleys, in the very gardens of the cottages, and in the middle of the villages that are re-peopled now but were then deserted by every emblem of life but battle.

It was a particularly impressive visit for me, because I was here for two days while the fighting that filled these graves was going on. There is the field in which I stumbled over the dead body of a Zouave, killed an hour before, lying on his back among the clover. It is golden with corn this year, but one of the crosses that rise among the grain must be his grave. The village is busy with harvest work again where I talked with the outpost of his comrades, two of them living—and eating bread and cheese without concern—while the third lay between them dead.

The woods where the Chasseurs d'Afrique went streaming gallantly by on their white Arab horses are sleepy in the sun; the long lines and grey heaps of huddled German dead are buried; the shell-cases have been picked up; the dead artillery horses and disembowelled cows that dotted the fields, with stiff legs sticking grotesquely in the air, are gone, and the horrible stench of death and burning and decay that hung like a foul miasma over miles of this fair country on those warm, misty September evenings has been blown away by a year's clean breezes.

Who would believe it all happened?

There are still shattered churches and houses pitted with shrapnel and machine-gun bullets to be seen in Barcy and Varedes, and some of the smaller bridges on the Marne are not yet repaired. One roadside inn, where a German shell has stuck, without exploding, half-way through the wall, has already changed its sign and calls itself "A l'Obus" (the Shell Inn); but it is inevitable that the tourists of a few years' time will hardly believe that the country they see is really the greatest battlefield of history.

Farmers will guard the crosses of the dead till the war ends. Already, where the corn is cut, the reaping machine has carefully avoided them; but when peace comes the noble dust that lies there will be taken up and reburied in some national Pantheon. Then all that we shall have to remind us of those great and terrible days will be a hideous granite monument like the one that already disfigures the battlefield on the road from Meaux to Barcy, commemorating with as much taste and dignity as a municipal Coronation fountain the heroes who died there for their country.