

ember afternoon, with the golden light of early autumn turning the common streets into a glorified highway and the motor cars into shining chariots. The room looks so cheerfully and prosaically busy, with its bales and packages in the rear, its workers busy with letters or callers and the air of a quiet and capable industry over it all. Surely, these pillows are not for wounded heads, these wristlets for young hands which may be dyed an ugly colour before many weeks are gone! But one tries to banish all thoughts of Lemberg or Liege and to come back to what may be done by Canadians at home.

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### The Mighty Trifles

REMEMBER, in these days of suspense and trial, that no service is too trivial to be rendered the cause of those who are fighting for freedom. The care of those who are left behind is the business of the individual, as well as the business of the nation. Already, in our cities, the committees of patriotic service are engaged in the work of looking after those who are in need of help and whom the war has temporarily bereft. This is no "charity" in the common acceptance of that much abused word. It is merely a civic duty which it would be our everlasting shame to neglect. If you cannot do anything which looks great to you in this behalf, you can, at least, perform some small personal service for those who are left to watch for news of the brave lads who have sailed away.

In Montreal, such services had begun before the month of August was on the wane, and the other cities of the Dominion were not slow in following the example of the metropolis. It is curious how all other differences melt away, in the face of the common need and the common danger. In the coming winter, which, even before the rumour of war, threatened to be a time of "hardness," there will be need of much patience and a constant demand for practical aid in a variety of service. So, we shall need all the courage and fortitude we possess, to meet the emergencies of war-time appeals.

If the small ways in which we may help seem, at times, to be pitifully inadequate, let us remember that every member of the regiment "counts" in the final charge. It was a small blaze in the Balkans which finally burst into the flames of continental strife, and it was two shots fired in the little kingdom of Serbia last June which echoed in every capital of Europe until the long-cherished national hate and jealousy broke into open conflict. It is quite impossible, in the complications of national strife, to say what is trivial, and, so, in the work of comfort and defence, we realize that the small task has its place in the campaign of usefulness.

The soldier, himself, sets us an excellent example in attention to the details of service, for one of his early duties is to display the virtue of military precision. Exactness is one of his first lessons, and, if we who are not at the front can apply the principle of "keeping your rifle and yourself just so," we shall not be without comfort. The brave words of a Canadian woman come back across years of forgetfulness—

"The soldier craveth naught  
Except to serve with might.  
I was not told to win or lose—  
My orders are to fight."

The clear head and the steady nerve are the visible signs of the new feminism, which is curiously like the old order when it comes to the final comparison after all.

ERIN

## A Twice-Told Tale

Belgium's Unutterable Story Rivals the Tale of Troy

By M. J. T.

THERE is an old tale of a city's demolition which for its majesty of subject and masterliness of telling has held the successive generations of even reluctant schoolboys fascinated. But Aeneas recounting for a queen's diversion the fable of Troy and its pitiable downfall, thousands of years ago, is faint in comparison with present reality—a Belgian woman appealing to two countries on behalf of her brave and stricken country people.

Madame Vandervelde, who is now in New York, and who is expected shortly in Canada, is the wife of the Belgian Minister of State, and has come with



Miss Emily Guest, of Belleville, Ont., who lectures in the interests of the Women's Institutes, and who, since the outbreak of war especially, has been advocating technical training for women on the farms.



An elusive group at the Woodbine, Toronto, the races this fall being manfully forsaken for Red Cross activities and patriotic interests. At the right of the trio is Lady Willison. There was no massed fashion for the cameras.

a tale for American hearing at which every ear must tingle. Tingle to some purpose—her purpose. For Madame Vandervelde comes with an object—the repatriation of Belgian refugees by aid of two countries which prize freedom and the openhandedness of which is as a proverb.

The teller needs not to invoke the Muse for this last most lamentable story, of which she is both the Aeneas and the Virgil. The new Aeneid was written already in the fire of Louvain and the blood of Liege, and she who spelled out the characters of it, scorched upon the lintels of her friends' houses and cut into the bosoms of her kindred, has but to revive the unutterable anguish and speech in hers to set her hearers weeping. Tragedy is the natural mother of epics.

When she reached New York, Madame Vandervelde was ill. She was not able to see the inter-

viewers. From her state-room, however, she gave out a message, claiming success for her self-imposed mission and making known the nature of her credentials. An extract from that communication follows:—

"Madame Vandervelde wishes to tell the American people what she herself has seen—the stream of refugees leaving Malines, the bombardment, the murderous raids of the Zeppelins, the story of the burning of Louvain. She wishes to tell them also of the sublime courage of the Belgian people—men and women—whose land has been ravaged by the horrors of war through no fault of their own, and thousands of whom are now destitute. Thousands have lost all they had, land, houses, farms, money, and the very tools with which they got their daily bread. Thousands of them are even without clothing, and have become wanderers and outcasts at the gates of the earth."

STRANGERS witnessed the sack of Louvain. "The descent of the Huns" and "the reign of terror" are terms in which they attempt to describe it. And if any doubted the wisdom of England in backing Belgium against the marauder, let him hear the convincing tale of a Dutchman, whose chance nationality only saved him:—

"Down the street, as the flames spread, came a party of German soldiers. With the butt ends of their rifles they battered in the front doors of the houses, and as the frightened inhabitants rushed out they shot them down—men, women and children. All this happened in a few minutes; what took place afterwards I did not see. The whole of that awful night I spent in the cellar with my wife and children."

The same was published in the yea-may London Times. Their Ghent correspondent appended to the story: "When the Germans marched out of Louvain they left Pomeranian troops to bury the dead. The Pomeranians, who are the lowest type in the Ger-

man army, went about their work in the manner of ghouls. They drank stolen beer and wine and, intoxicated, dragged the bodies of the victims to the square in front of the railway station. Here shallow trenches were dug in the flower-beds and the bodies thrown in. Hands and arms protruded from the so-called graves."

If aliens tell such stories of the pillage—accounts wherein the key-note is horror—how must the narrative move the listener when the raconteuse is a native of the kingdom which "wears its crown of ruin like a star," when sorrow is the burthen of the story and the poignancy of grief excites compassion!

The United States and Canada weep wisely. They staunch their tears with more than handkerchiefs when their hands go deep down into their pockets, after the recital, and the opportunity has been given them to help. And what does Madame Vandervelde ask of you? Not revenge, but relief. Not destruction, but construction, the re-establishment of Belgians as a people; for exile, reclamation; for waste, fertility; for homelessness in the five pillaged provinces—Homes! For the victims of bodily mutilation, she asks no help; there is no restitution! And they, the descendants of dead heroes of whom Caesar, the soldier, recorded, "Bravest of all—the Belgians," come not back!

So the Belgian woman of the new Aeneid comes as one shedding a luminous aura, in the light of which, her compassionate hearers must see

their way anew to the winning of—

"God out of knowledge and good out of infinite pain  
And sight out of blindness and purity out of a stain!"

She had small need, surely, of her Queen's letter and of King Albert's word of commendation, in making her appeal to a continent able, in prodigious measure, to "overcome evil with good." Yet the Queen has equipped her subject with a letter, the nature of which is not an arraignment against a benighted and foredoomed invader, but a statement of distress, an appeal for assistance for her people.

For which reason the new Aeneid is mightier than the old one which stirred, but did not actuate, the hearer. Who would not be swift to the succour of the Belgians, true to their 'scutcheon against such fearful odds! The last verse of their national