The Western Home Monthly

How a Boy Helped to Save Paris

An Incident of the "Great Drive." By E. G. Bayne.



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some leagues behind the danger zone, like flapping, restless vultures, waiting for their carrion.

They had with them their body servants and a cook or two, and as the inn cellar was full of wine, the garden of vegetables, and the pantries of dry foods, they lived fairly well, while awaiting definite tidings of the army "up front." ling old hands.

Every day, every hour almost, the news of a triumphal entry into the most beauti
Every day, every hour almost, the news would call the boy, and they would go

T the little estaminet of the Croix can tell? Many of the villagers who had D'Or, which stood upon the bank not escaped in time were now pale of a small river in the department corpses. Such is chance—or is it preof the Somme, a squad of Prussian officers had quartered themselves. The greygreen hordes were pushing on to Paris,
but these half-dozen officials lingered safe
themselves are pushing on to Paris,
but these half-dozen officials lingered safe
rugged, and rather handsome face, in
the location is challenged and remained. The old
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the sun b its halo of white hair, uplifted to the blue sky, he could not see. Or he would wander in his little garden, pottering about from plant to plant, tapping his way along the neat paths with a stout marked from time to time. He was the thorn cane, stooping now to inhale the fragrance of a flower, or feeling the weighted grape-vines with fond, tremb-bit of evidence into account.

trated his "efficient" German brain He noticed that old Laforce often walked ahead of little Victor, who would linger along as boys will. to examine the berrybushes or the wheel-tracks on the road. or to scout for birds' nests

Now why did the two always go to-gether for the cows? Why did the old man rely solely upon his trusty stick, and never swerve from side to side of the road as blind men do? And above all, what else besides a search for their cattle occupied the hour or so which elapsed

All these little points the colonel

So he pondered, his cold eyes narrowed to a slit. Of course if they were French spies they would have to be—disposed of. Personally the colonel would not be obliged to perform the deed. He kept his own white hands always immaculately clean, and if there was blood to be spilt he had but to summon his henchmen, to do the work. So, upon an evening in the latter part of August the colonel watched the old Frenchman and his grandson much as a spider might watch a couple of flies that were at its mercy. They departed for their cows as usual, and when they had disappeared over the hill beyond the yew-hedge, the officer called his orderly and spoke a few terse words to him. Saluting, the man made all speed, though

craftily, after Laforce and the boy.

At this juncture an under-officer came out of the inn with a message in code for his chief. The latter frowned as he read. It was the third disappointing piece of news in less than twolve heaves. piece of news in less than twelve hours

The great German army was meeting with obstacles! His own particular battalion had been lured into a swamp and decimated. As for Paris, she, it appeared, was more firmly established in her stronghold behind her triple ring of forts than

even they had calculated upon!

"That battalion of mine," muttered the colonel with an oath, "has the backbone of a jelly fish! They got caught in a marsh, hein? What took them into a marsh? They had their orders"

"The lieutenant said that French mitrailleuse fire from a wood on their mitrailleuse fire from a wood on their left, as they left the town of Xcaused them to seek safety on the right," said the other officer. "And the quagmire was on the right."

"But how did the French get to those woods? I know their positions. See here—on the map. I know to an hour where they stand. Where—how—"

"A spy in this neighborhood. That, you will find, is the answer."
"Himmel! We have annihilated the entire population!" "Except the old man and the boy,"

said the other, evenly.

The officers' eyes met.

"The old man," said the chief after a

"seems too old and stupid. moment, Besides he is blind. As for the childwell I am having the pair watched. A spy set upon the spies! Tell Otto to bring out another bottle of the beer"

"Hist! The old man—let me tell you what I saw only this morning—"

began the other.
"The beer, I say."

The under-officer called a servant and

gave the order. Then he approached his chief again. "To-day the old fellow was carrying some beets. I watched him. He dropped one and it rolled away from him several feet away. Instead of groping about for it with his stick as a blind man

would do, what do you think he did?"
"Well?" "I was watching with the eye of a cat, but he did not know that, of course. He stepped down the path to where the vegetable lay and put his hand right on it—unerringly."
"So?" cried the colonel, who had

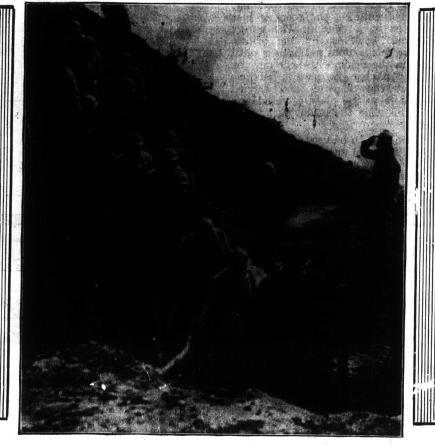
"So?" cried the colonel, who had already entertained his own suspicions of old Laforce, but did not choose to

say so.
"Either his ears," said the other, grim-ly, "are better than they ought to be at his age, or else he is not quite so blind as he pretends!"

"We'll not a trop for him the "

"We'll set a trap for him, then."

"We'll wait till the boy is away somewhere. In fact we'll see that he is detained here, in the inn, to-morrow at sunset. Then the old man will start



M. Poincaire, the French President, Visits the Soldiers in the Trenches in the Meuse District President Poincaire, has paid many visits to the front since the beginning of the war. He has manifested a personal interest in the men on the field of battle

blind man of seventy and a boy of about up with him. ten or eleven, presumably his grandson. They were the sole occupants of the small auberge which stood across the road from the inn where the officers nightly

ful city of the world, might come hum- for their cows. By the slight chill in the ming over the wires. Paris, Paris was in air old Laforce seemed to guess the hour, if the boy were not about, and sometimes The inhabitants of the tiny village had he would start away alone and proceed fled-all but two. These were an old as far as the bridge before the boy caught

The Prussian colonel, as he sat out under a big lime tree before the inn door, his maps and plans and other documents om the inn where the officers nightly on a table beside him, watched this regular proceeding for some evenings with an absent eye. Then an idea pene-

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