

FROM THE TRENCHES

associate later with the presence of the war atmosphere. I discovered to my surprise a train waiting in the station with steam up:—it was “Lord Kitchener’s Special,” prepared to carry him on his way to Egypt. But Lord Kitchener at the last moment had not come, for reasons that have since proved amply sufficient. By various persuasive arguments we at last convinced the undecided station-master that as the line had been cleared the express might run through; and we reached Paris in four hours; the “last” unofficial express during the war.

The Gare du Nord was empty of porters; but the long lines of platform were piled ten feet high down the centre with enormous trunks—the abandoned luggage of escaping tourists.

Outside the station the approaches were barred by barriers, where dragoons demanded passes from every foot passenger. Troops poured past, starting for their different centres of concentration. The suburban traffic had ceased. The streets were full of people kept in the town against their will by the demands of the mobilisation.