

IN THE VINEYARDS OF BURGUNDY

BY ESTELLE M. KERR

ILLUSTRATIONS BY THE AUTHOR



HE level road that runs from Beaune to Dijon is bordered with vineyards. They cover the plains and vanish up the hillside on one hand and disappear into the valley on the other. Shorn of all grace, each vine stands erect, one pace removed from its fellow, while the stake to which it is tied projects like a gray spear above the green. Here and there a sunbonneted woman, an old man or a child may be seen pruning the vines, tying them with wisps of straw, harrowing the ground or spraying the leaves till they are changed to a metallic blue which seems to be reflected from the sky above.

At intervals throughout the countryside are gray stone hamlets with tiled roofs, each with its ancient church, a chateau or two and a café, and my stay in Gevrey-Chambertin has been of sufficient duration to give me a feeling of pride in stating that here may be found the oldest chateau and the nicest café in the whole canton! They tell me too, that Chambertin is one of the best varieties of burgundy and that the names of the nearby villages sound sweet in the ears of wine bibbers, but the best is always exported and the clients of our café are apt to think more of quantity than quality. The name above our doorway, "Aux Vendanges de Bour-

gogne", is seductive. Enticing, too, are the green tables and chairs in the gravelled space before it, separated from the dusty highroad by shrubs in green tubs, flowering hydrangeas and nasturtium vines. I have the self-righteous feeling of the early riser as I sit here, carefully stirring my morning coffee to extract the full flavour from my limited supply of sugar. The *vignerons* are only now going to work, for at eight o'clock they call it seven,—they did not alter their clocks with the daylight-saving law! The café is quiet at this hour; but the paper girl brings me the Paris papers and before long, customers will begin to arrive; French officers in dusty motors, poilus with transport wagons, American soldiers driving ambulances or motor lorries on the road from Beaune to Dijon. The "Sammies" order *limonade*; they have not the Frenchman's love of wine, nor his capacity for drink which daily fills me with amazement.

Vineyardmen who work by the day, are given by their employers a quart of *petit vin* at ten o'clock, a quart at noon, another at four and still another at night, but sometimes they find that insufficient and will drop in between times at a café where wine of a richer hue gladdens their hearts. "Old George," when he is not working, will drink as many as six large bottles of the real article and there are other