

gathering a large bunch of field-flowers and a few others from the house garden, she started off.

St. John's Hospital was situated on a canal which wound its way through part of the town. Elspeth avoided the Grande Place by taking a circuitous path through the fish-market, the beautiful carvings of which had long been destroyed.

On reaching the gate, she showed her papers, then followed the stone-paved walk to the arched entrance.

A black-robed nun was showing a visiting surgeon the huge mortar and pestle which the nuns used in the fifteenth century for the grinding of their medicines. It stood three feet high in the dispensary, which, owing to the crowded condition of the hospital, served also as the office.

Elspeth wondered what had become of all the valuable paintings which had been in the hospital in peacetime. She remembered her father showing her through a powerful glass, the exquisite colours on the three panels which depicted Saint Ursula's pilgrimage to Italy. After the war, where would these treasures be?

Elspeth's work consisted of rolling bandages, passing cool drinks to the patients and writing their letters. To-day, however, she would first distribute her flowers. She passed down the long rooms, leaving a glowing flower on each bed. A nun met her half-way down the long room.

"Good morning, Elspeth. How is Marianne this morning?" she asked.

"Her mind is better, thank you, *ma mère*, but she is very much depressed. She dislikes more and more to wait upon General Aldheim, so that I cannot stay very long to-day," she answered.

The nun passed on, and Elspeth turned to the next bed. A badly wounded young Englishman lay there. He made a feeble signal with his hand, and as she placed a poppy on the coverlet, he whispered to her in French.

Are you a Belgian, *mademoiselle*?

"With all my heart and soul," she answered.

"Then for the love of the Allies, undertake a mission for me. I gathered from your conversation with the nun, that you have access to the rooms of the General von Aldheim. I lost my bearings two days ago in the fog, and was brought down in the German lines. Secret orders for the British General have been taken from me. Try to find and burn at once, the *blue* paper which he has in his possession. If you do not destroy it, Bruges will be blown up. Thank you so much for the flower," he said in a louder tone. Then, closing his eyes, he turned his head wearily away.

Elspeth was so astonished, that she stood looking at the young man with round eyes, wondering if he were delirious. Then a weak voice said, "For God's sake, hurry."

She turned at once and finished her tour of the room as quickly as possible. The young man watched her go.

"I hope she believes what I told her about the blowing up of Bruges," he said to himself. "What may happen, will be worse, but it was better to tell her that, in case she would have hesitated at taking a personal risk. She looks very young."

Elspeth excused herself to the nuns, and hurried back to the house. The General and his aide were both out, but a sentry, his bayonet fixed, stood outside the General's room. She knew that she could never bribe this man. She left her hat in her room as if she had gone up for that purpose, and then went downstairs to the kitchen. Her sister was there alone.

"Marianne," she whispered as she closed the door, "I want you to help me. Use all of the will power that you have, dear, for only you can do what must be done. I have to find something which is lost. It means life or death to both of us. Let no one come into this room, no one. Do you understand?"