

CHAPTER XIX.

HOME.

IN September I was again examined, and the board finding me unfit for further military service, I was certified for exchange home.

There were four hundred of us in the party that left Murren on September fifteenth, four hundred who will never again find the joy they found in that journey.

Our special train carried us through Geneva, without a stop until we came to the French border. As the train went over the line we yelled and beat one another in the wildest paroxysms of joy. We were free at last, back in the land of our Allies, back where we could oppose the Kaiser and all his rotten hordes by our every conscious act.

At Aix-les-Bains we were tendered a welcome that was most impressive. French cavalry were drawn up and a big French band played "God Save the King" and the "Marseillaise." Champagne flowed like water, and everybody seemed to have gone crazy at the same minute. I remember carrying on a spirited and quite satisfactory conversation with several French girls who were spilling words faster than a piece of machinery could have done. It made no difference about the talk, we were thoroughly in accord, and I could not have enjoyed myself more fully under any circumstances. Those French girls are not dependent upon words to get their meaning across, and the whole population have a way of making you glad that you are alive, without going into details about it.

We also stopped at Lyon, where another great crowd had assembled. Here we were met by a British staff officer, and the enthusiasm and hilarity was again turned on. The Mayor gave a wonderful address in English, which was responded to by the English officer in French, after which we were all loaded into autos and taken out to some beautiful gardens, where we