

CHAPTER II.

WITH THE FRENCH-BRITISH FORCES, "SOMEWHERE IN FRANCE."

The day is dying. The sky is heavy with smoke and occasionally a bursting shell can be seen in the distance. A sharp engagement is in progress.

A large home, once handsome, shows the ravages of war. The roof is crumbling in places and windows and doors are shattered. Barr creeps around a heavy hedge; takes a hasty inventory and beckons to those behind him. Clyde and De Phelan assisting a wounded general make their appearance and are closely followed by a half-dozen soldiers, all showing the effects of battle. They run under cover of the foliage and the deepening shadows to the entrance of the house and enter. By the flicker of matches the party enters the drawing room. For a brief moment Barr is seen as he draws the heavy hangings at the windows closely shut. Another match flickers and Barr is seen at the mantle of the huge fireplace as he lights a few of the candles which are placed in heavy candelabre and used as ornaments. The room and its contents become discernible. Bricks and mortar cover the floor. A bed and many bandages scattered about are evidence that the room has been used as an emergency hospital. The handsomely embroidered cover of the table is half off and the bric-a-brac is lying shattered on the floor.

The general is placed tenderly upon the bed and Clyde prepares to give first aid to the injured. Barr places soldiers on guard and instructs one to investigate a passage that can be seen through an open panel in the wall; he starts upon an investigating tour that takes him through the many rooms of the mansion. In an upstairs room Barr comes across a crucifix—two candles in silver sticks are placed one upon each side. These Barr takes with him. As he re-enters the drawing room Barr holds up the crucifix and says: "Sunday evening—we shall say mass." Clyde assisted by De Phelan, is dressing the general's wounds and as Barr enters the soldier comes from the passage way and says: "There is an underground passage that opens about a mile distant—well out of sight of the enemy's lines."