

sional habit had been for forty years to succor the afflicted) Madeleine took in very little at the time, although it was to come back to her again and again. At that moment she thought that she did not believe a single word of it. She certainly did not at all think that war were the best of us but wretched sinners, and she had a remotely academic a belief as any other twentieth-century dweller in the desirability of doing good to your enemies. The idea of Jules wounded in Germany did indeed bring a flood of confused emotions into her mind. If Germany should be invaded, would Frenchmen be stamping into strangers' houses and taking the food out of the mouth of the owners, would they . . . ?

"Well," said Sœur Ste. Lucie, impatient of her trance-like stare.

It was none of what she had been thinking which now moved Madeleine to say automatically, "Oh, of course we'll have to give them the bandages and the peroxide." She could not have named the blind impulse which drove her to say this, beyond that a sort of angry self-respect was mixed with it. Her head ached furiously, whirling with fatigue and lack of food, her back ached as though it were being beaten with hammers. She renounced any attempt to think.

"Here," said Sœur Ste. Lucie, staggering herself with exhaustion. "The baby is only a few days old. You're not fit to be doing this."

Madeleine, who had lain flat on her back for two weeks after the birth of the other two children, shook her head.