

A VISIT TO THE FRONT

the monocle, who had mounted to the seat beside our chauffeur, shouted some terrible German words at them and snote them into an immobile attitude of attention. At several places the road was barred by wooden, stone, or wire barricades, but these our monocled Captain did not respect; he ordered the soldiers to remove them and sometimes even did not wait for them to be thrust aside, but had the car driven high on the sidewalks around them, and thus we were whirled, to the screaming of our siren, out of town. We paused once, by a door in a château-wall, where a sentinel, a Saxon, from his green cap with the horse's tail twisted about it, stood at salute, while a young Saxon officer, an *aide* of the General commanding the corps, whose trenches we were to visit, came out and joined us, and we went screeching out onto the road to Armentières. The long highway was cumbered with all the engines of war—guns, caissons, battalions of infantry, squadrons of cavalry; and always wagon trains, lumbering on heavily toward the insatiable front, stirring up forever clouds of dust, which settled subtly everywhere and made everything obnoxious to the touch, to the sight, to all the senses. But at the importunate and imperative screech of the siren on the grey car, with the target of the staff and the arms of the Crown Prince, they all hastily turned aside, and we passed, whirling on through the dusty villages, whose every door was chalked in German, and from whose every window showed the frowsy yellow out-thrust heads of the German soldiers quartered there, with the women slaving for them, and toothless old men with trembling chins sitting on the doorsteps in the sun vacantly staring at the changing scenes of that onward progress toward the front.