

Many pianos of great value were destroyed, and some few had been left intact, with small bombs or other explosives attached to lid or key, and those foolish enough to raise the lid or strike the keys paid the penalty in missing hands, or disfigured faces. Sauchy Cauchy was in an awful condition; houses and furniture in indescribable heaps, but the thing that struck me most was the task our boys must have had to take it. The town stood on a high eminence, and it was surrounded on three sides with the greatest depth of barbed wire I have ever seen. At the foot of the hill, a mile and a half from the town, ran the canal about two hundred yards across, and its bank held by numerous machine guns. The bridges were all blown and several attempts were made by our boys before they got across, but courage and patience succeeded, and at last the other bank was won, and our splendid fellows found their way through the wire and gained the town, but not before the despoilers had wrecked everything.

I went into one big chateau, and the beautiful upholstered furniture was smashed and cut, the splendid concert grand piano had the front knocked in and overturned, and the bathroom tap had been turned on, and flooded the splendid apartments. Ecourt St. Quentin on the other side of the canal was in the same condition, as also was Paluel, a little farther on. Anisch, our next stop, was the first place we struck where the inhabitants had been allowed to remain behind.

We were only here a few days, and when we reached Somain, our next stop, the people all turned out to meet us, and made us right welcome. We found the children very shy of us at first, but we were not surprised when we were informed that the Germans had told them that we were a race of savages who would eat them up. They soon found out the difference, however, for as our boys