

BELGIUM

I

A VISIT TO THE FRONT

I HAD seen one side, and a hideous side, of the war, but that was the side behind the scenes; and I was always regretting, or reminding myself that one day I should regret, that I had not seen that other side, of martial glory and splendour and heroism, of which we had only the echoes in the distant thud and boom of the cannonading there from the trenches so far to the south of us—the sound that could be heard always when by day one was away from the noises of the city or when by night they were stilled. I had often reproached Lancken with inhospitality in not taking Villalobar and me to see their great spectacle and finally one afternoon he asked me if I was really in earnest, and when I said that of course I was, he forthwith arranged the excursion for the next day, the twentieth of July, and we drove away in the afternoon—Lancken, Villalobar, Count Harrach and I—in Lancken's big grey automobile. We took the familiar road to Hal, and, driving rapidly by Enghien and Ath, we came to Tournay by tea-time. There, after inspecting the cathedral with its famous five towers, a noble specimen of medieval architecture dating from the eleventh century, we went to a