

A NIGHT OF HEROES

Leman and the King who told his people that Caesar said the Belgians were the bravest race in Gaul. It is a bare and dirty little room with sawdust on the floor and cigar-smoke in the atmosphere. There are wooden benches for the customers with wooden tables in front of them, stained by many a catastrophe. The ale is from Munich, dark and good, but to-night it is called Belgian beer with a wink at the potman and a broad smile into the pewter tankard that holds it.

Listen to the talk of those men and you will gather a little of what this day has meant to the nation that yesterday was called scornfully an "arrangement." They are telling one another that Belgium has been born again or rather born anew. They confess to the first stirrings of nationality; they speak no longer of their differences, but of their union. Some of them at least, for many are too tired to speak, and others of the peasant class have little knowledge of the meaning of events. They are a very curious people, very childlike and simple. They hold the simplest ideas. Germany on this night is beaten and the end of the war is in sight. Belgium has vanquished Germany.

It is in vain that the little Frenchman who has found himself in the company expostulates, declaring that the German blow has not yet fallen and that the future is dark as night. They smile with vast incredulity, or they are indifferent. They have the peasant sense of man against man, and some of them know the German and despise him. The Flanders peasant is a big man and a simple man, and his ideas are simple. Being better men than the Germans, it is natural that they should defeat the Germans. They will go on defeating them.

There is a long road leading out through the suburbs