

II

"LE BRAVE BELGE!"

The stampede to Europe — Early days in Belgium — Characteristics of the Allies' armies — Rumors — First skirmishes — When would the English come? — *Suffolk* captured — P.O. of the Belgian defense — A Taube and a Belgian militia patrol — Drums before us fall — A momentous decision.

THE rush from Monterey, in Mexico, when a telegram said that general European war was inevitable; the run and jump aboard the *Lusitania* at New York the night that war was declared by England against Germany; the Atlantic passage on the liner of indelible memory, a suspense broken by fragments of war news by wireless; the arrival in an England before the war was a week old; the journey to Belgium in the hope of reaching the scene of action! — as I write, all seem to have the perspective of history, so final are the processes of war, so swift their conclusion, and so eager is every one for each day's developments. As one grows older the years seem shorter; but the first year of the Great War is the longest year I have known.

Le brave Belge! One must be honest about him. If one lets his heart run away with his judgment he does his mind an injustice. A fellow-countryman who was in London and fresh from home in the eighth month of the war, asked me for my views of the relative efficiency of the different armies engaged.

"Do you mean that I am to speak without regard to personal sympathies?" I asked.

"Certainly," he replied.