

frames lie here and there upon the plateau. Plodding across the fields are little knots of stretcher-bearers and burial parties. Occasionally a shell breaks among them, but they carry on their task unheeding.

From that high level one looks over what had been the smiling land of France, dotted with bosky villages and graceful church spires. Along these roads children came singing from school, and from this plateau of Santerre was garnered much of the nation's agrarian wealth. Below that eminence in the distant days of peace the broad valleys shone in the sun like the bright pattern of a patchwork quilt—the many hues of the ripening grain; wheat, oats and barley, millet, vetch and beans, undivided by hedge or fence but melting one into the other in their erratic little squares and oblongs—undistinguished indeed save by the bright hues of nature's palette.

Now all is desolation. The hand of the Hun lies heavy on the land. Tottering walls and empty shells are all that are left of the villages; church towers are levelled in sad heaps of stone and mortar, or, less happy, expose to heaven scarred flanks and desecrated altars. Not a living soul is to be seen save men in khaki. Upon this road stands a monument: "To the heroes of the army who on this spot made their heroic stand in the war of 1870"—mentioning them lovingly by name, 'Officier' this and 'Soldat' that; it has been torn in two by a shell.

Already in a dug-out, wherein a few hours before the Boche sat secure, a forward dressing-station is established. Here first aid is given to all and sundry, our men and Boche, stretcher cases and walking wounded. Prisoners reinforce our over-taxed stretcher-bearers, working in parties under their own officers, good-natured, ingratiating. The Y.M.C.A. is here too, and serves out indiscriminately hot tea, biscuits, chocolate and cigarettes. There is a little grumbling because the Boche fare as well as our own men, but it is a free hand-out and the supply seems inexhaustible. Especially are the tired troops grateful for the cigarettes, a scarce commodity.

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