

martialled for treason. During the fighting in Northern France, when ordered to fire, D'Alsac had fired, not into the French army but on his own comrades in the German army. His guilt was proved beyond question. From the first Henri had known that his doom was sealed. He read no pity in the merciless eyes of the officer before him. Kolonel Hauffmann arose to pronounce the sentence.

"Henri D'Alsac," he said, "your guilt has been clearly proven. To prevent repetition of your offence it is expedient for us to make an example of you. Tomorrow at daybreak you will be shot as a traitor. Is there anything you wish to say?"

Standing at attention, Henri spoke in a clear bold voice. "Sir, I had hoped to be able to fight for my country. Since it is my lot only to die for it, I am content. A traitor I never was, or never shall be. With perfectly clear conscience I can still say "Vive la France."

Since Henri's departure his mother had not heard a word from him. On the morning of August 20th she had a premonition of some news. She would not leave the house for fear of missing it. Evening came and still no news. She knew of the retreat of the Belgians and the French, and fondly pictured her son as doing superhuman deeds to change the fortunes of the war. For his sake she must be courageous. She went to his loved retreat, the greenery, to gather strength for the days ahead. Suddenly from the dusk appeared the form of a young girl. Silently she drew near, handed Madame D'Alsac a crumpled piece of paper, and glided as silently into the shadows. Madame D'Alsac pressed the paper to her heart, then to her lips, then opened it. As she read the smile left her eye, the light fled from her face. These were the words, written in French:

*"Northern France,  
August 19th*

*My Darling Mother —*

*"As I promised, I have never taken the life of a Frenchman, and I never shall. Yours till death and after,*

*Henri."*

Across the note was scribbled in German these words: "Your son was shot as a traitor this morning at daybreak."

"A traitor," she repeated. "Not so, the bravest of all heroes."

H. G. M., '20.