

Heroic France Defies the Hun



Comtesse de Bryas is a Frenchwoman, who came to America last April to represent the American committee for devastated France, and is now engaged in an extensive tour of the United States, speaking about her experiences in the war-ridden districts. The comtesse's father is French, but her mother was a Philadelphian who went to Europe when a small child and was brought up there. Her great-grandfathers, George Clymer and Thomas Willing, and her granduncle, George Read, were all signers of the Declaration of Independence, and one of them, George Clymer, was among the six who helped to frame the Constitution.—Editor's Note.

By COMTESSE MADELEINE DE BRYAS. **I** SOMETIMES meet, in the course of my travels, people who say: "Ah, poor France! Tragic, invaded country!" But to these people I would say: "No, no! You do not know your France. It is not poor France, but noble France. Not tragic France, but heroic France!"

I can best explain my meaning by describing an incident which took place on the occasion of one of the recent air raids on Paris. An air raid is a nerve-racking time. The newspaper accounts and the magazine stories do not tell you one-hundredth of the anguish lived through by the people who crouch in their cellars, listening to bombs that explode close by and expecting all the time that the next missile will demolish the house over their heads.

The favorite gathering places for civilians during air raids is in the cellars. During the raid of which I speak, one of these underground places was crowded with refugees. But they were not snoring or trembling. Instead, they were constantly joking and laughing about their predicament. They did not for one second lose their fine courage and stanchness.

When the bombs had ceased to fall, they came up to the street level once more. But they did not breathe great sighs of relief and thank their lucky stars for not being hit. Not they! Their eyes glowed with the fire of unquenched spirit, and they shook their fists in the direction of the departing German airplanes.

"Those fools!" they shouted. "Those fools! They think they can break us! They do not know us! Never shall we yield! Never!"

This is not the only splendid exhibition of French devotion that I have seen with my own eyes. The people in the rural regions are no less determined in their ardor. Although nearly one-fifth of France has been invaded by a ruthless enemy and some portions invaded the second time, these country folk would die rather than give themselves up to the foe.

In a village of the devastated district I found a little old woman who was living alone. She was working at washing linen for the soldiers who were in trenches not far away. Her own house had been burned down by the Germans. She told me her pathetic story.

It seems that a German officer who had a very bad reputation for molesting the civilians had been quartered in her house. After he had been there for a few hours he went to the small stove which heated the house and opened it to put in some wood. But when he put in the stick of wood he allowed the end to protrude, so that, as soon as it began to burn, the fire blazed outward into the room. He then placed a screen near this blazing wood so that it would catch fire. The old woman saw what he was doing and knew that it was his design to burn down her house. He had already burned a house in the next street in the same manner. Knowing that she was powerless to prevent him, and being filled with despair, she fell on her knees before him.

"Spare me!" she entreated of him. "Spare this house and allow me to live here in peace. What have I ever done to you?"

But she had hardly uttered these words when shame overcame her because she was abusing herself before a German. In another instant she had risen to her feet.

"What am I doing!" she exclaimed. "Je suis perdu! I am disgraced. I have entreated a favor from the foe of my native country."

Then she crossed the room before the astonished officer and took up his gun. Placing it in his hands she told him to kill her.

"I deserve no less than death," she said. "I have disgraced France by kneeling to ask a favor of one of her enemies."

Probably the German officer would have killed the woman, but at that moment one of his brother-officers came into the house. He must have had a more tender heart, for he took pity on the old woman and put a stop to the proceedings. So her



house escaped for the time being. But later on it was burned by other Germans. When I found this woman she was working 18 hours each day washing for the soldiers. I asked her why she worked so hard and she told me that it was because she had nothing left to her in the wide world, and the only way to keep herself from heartbreak was to be always occupied.

The conditions under which most of these people have been living are horrifying. Their houses are heaps of ruins. You can hardly believe the systematic way in which the Germans proceeded to destroy their dwellings. A bomb was thrown into every house along the line of march. The furniture was all broken up or burned, fruit trees were cut down, and the wells polluted. Yet, when the invading tide was swept back these villagers came back at once to their former homes. This devotion of the French peasant to his little home is something which Americans can hardly appreciate. He loves it ardently; it is almost a part of him; he cannot bear to leave it.

During the time when they were struggling to rebuild their shattered homes, these peasants had to live in cellars and dugouts. Of course these places were most unhealthy and not fit to remain in. I once went down into a cellar in which an old couple was living. The roof of the cellar was so low that when I was seated on a little plank talking to the old people I had to stoop. The floor was entirely mud, and the water seeped in through the walls and trickled down in tiny streamlets. In the corner was the straw bed which had been furnished the old couple seven months before. It was indescribably filthy and so damp that one could twist it and wring water out of it. Yet the chief desire of the old woman was for a plate to eat off. The Germans had destroyed their crockery and household utensils and they had only one old metal skillet, in which they cooked and from which they ate.

In one village I saw a mother who had gone back to live in a little shelter which she had built for herself in the corner formed by the only two remaining walls of her dwelling. Over the top of this place she placed planks. One side was open to the weather. The cold, raw weather made it difficult to exist in such a place. I myself have lived in a little wooden building near the front, similar to the barracks in which the soldiers live, and I know the cruel winter weather of these parts of France.

The hardship has been greatest on the little children. Oh, the poor children! They no longer play. They have forgotten all their games. They do not know what it means to run and laugh and be gay. As they walk along the streets you will see them start suddenly and look over their shoulders in a frightened way. So great has been the terror instilled into them by the Germans.

An officer told me of seeing two little children standing against a wall in the town of Maissin, in the north of France, one day in August, 1914. Across the road was a burning house. When the French officer asked them why they were waiting so patiently, they replied that a German had shut their father and mother up in that house and had told them to wait there until they came back to fetch them.

The treatment of children during the German occupation was very terrible. Little tots of four and five, and children on up to the ages of thirteen and fourteen, were forced to work all day for their enslavers. They were taken into the fields at five in the morning and were not allowed to come back until seven in the evening. During all that time they were given only one meal. Their tasks were to dig potatoes, cut away the barbed-wire entanglements and pick up unexploded shells. After the Germans went away there was no milk to be got because all the cows had been either killed or driven away. In one district there were 500 children who existed for months without a single drop of milk. I met one little girl who had been kept for 20 days on a diet consisting of nothing but bread and soup, the latter being watery and scarcely at all nourishing.

The destruction of the schoolhouses has made it impossible for the young children to gain any education. It is no strange thing to encounter a boy or girl of eleven who can neither read nor write. In their hideous thoroughness, the Germans destroyed books, pencils, desks and all. Not a thing was left. After the American relief workers came into the devastated regions they established schools and built little wooden buildings in which to carry on the work.

At one school they told a story of a little girl who was brought in with the other children to learn to read. As soon as she discovered an old chair in one of the corners she immediately got into it and curled up in utter enjoyment and relaxation. She could not be persuaded to get out of that chair. The teacher inquired why she was so pleased with the chair and learned that the household in which the child lived had not boasted a single chair since the first invasion of the Germans.

The separation of the children from their parents is another very tragic occurrence. In the months and years before they are reunited the children grow and change so that they are not recognizable to their parents when they meet again. Some of them, to be sure, wear on a chain about their necks little gold baptismal gifts on which their names are inscribed. But this is exceptional. It is one of the confessed schemes of the Germans to divide and scatter families as much as possible.

My heart bleeds for the children of France! Oh, that they should suffer this unmerited abuse and tribulation!

The deportation of young girls has been systematically practiced. A German officer comes to the front door of a house and orders the entire family to assemble outside on the door step. Then he picks at random a number of the younger women of the family. "I will take you . . . and you . . . and you!" he says, indicating the chosen ones with his forefinger. At this summons they must leave their homes at once. They are not allowed to pack their belongings nor to carry much baggage. They are permitted only so much as they can carry wrapped in a handkerchief.

After they are taken into Germany they are put to work cultivating the fields, doing the hardest and most menial kind of labor. They are forced to live with the soldiers, and are rudely treated by them. They can send no word to their families, and it is almost as though they were dead.

The relief work in the invaded districts has been tireless. Great credit is due to the American committee for devastated France, organized by Miss Anne Morgan. Over 1,000 children have been turned over to this committee to be cared for. One of its most useful works has been in assisting the stricken people to leave their homes so long as there is danger from the Germans in the vicinity. Pitiful stories are told of the flight of these people. One old woman refused to be separated from her goat in transit, and would only consent to go when she could be assured that another goat could be got in case her own was lost.

France has been hard-pressed, but she is not broken. Never has the morale of the French people been more unshaken than it is today. France hails with joy the arrival of the Americans. It is most fitting that these great sister republics should be fighting side by side in this hour of stress. Victory will be won; it is inevitable! But ah, the pain, the woe and the unnecessary degradation that have followed in the wake of the invaders! Will the world ever forget these? Can the bitter memory ever be effaced?

THE END OF THE WAR.

A soldier at Camp Grant asked a French lieutenant, who was there as instructor, how much longer the war would last. The Frenchman calmly answered: "Well, I am not sure, but the tenth year will surely be the worst, and after that every seventh year will be bad."

Missed the Kaiser.
A negro from Louisiana supposed when he reached the training camp that he was already "at the front."
"Say, boss," he asked an officer, "where's dat feller who calls the Kaiser? I've been here six weeks an' I ain' seen him."—Exchange.

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Yes, Luke, we know that every married man has a grievance—and so has his wife until she becomes a widow.
Germany limits clothing purchases by civilians.

Writing Material.
"The late Senator Fairbanks," said a Washington diplomat, "was a wide reader, but he hated realism of the Zola type."
"He claimed that such realism had no defense, and he once said to a defender of it:
"You're about as convincing, my good sir, as the shabby young man who was held up at the exit of the hotel writing room with about 700 sheets of the hotel's costly note paper bulging from his various pockets."
"This young man said to the cop in his defense:
"I am gathering material for a novel.""

Don't Poison Baby.
FORTY YEARS AGO almost every mother thought her child must have PAREGORIC or laudanum to make it sleep. These drugs will produce sleep, and a FEW DROPS TOO MANY will produce the SLEEP FROM WHICH THERE IS NO WAKING. Many are the children who have been killed or whose health has been ruined for life by paregoric, laudanum and morphine, each of which is a narcotic product of opium. Druggists are prohibited from selling either of the narcotics named to children at all, or to anybody without labelling them "poison." The definition of "narcotic" is: "A medicine which relieves pain and produces sleep, but which in poisonous doses produces stupor, coma, convulsions and death." The taste and smell of medicines containing opium are disguised, and sold under the names of "Drops," "Cordials," "Soothing Syrups," etc. You should not permit any medicine to be given to your children without you or your physician know of what it is composed. CASTORIA DOES NOT CONTAIN NARCOTICS, if it bears the signature of Chas. H. Fletcher.

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Don't Poison Baby.

Little Dorothy's uncle is both at the war, and she has a great admiration for soldiers. The other day in a crowded street car she was sitting on her mother's lap when a wounded soldier entered. Dorothy immediately slipped to the floor.
"Here, Soldy," she offered, "you can sit on mama's lap."—Harper's Magazine.

Patriot.
He (watching another couple)—I suppose he feels that he could not live without her.
She—Yes, and I don't think he'll have a chance to find out that he could.

Beautiful, clear white clothes delights the laundress who uses Red Cross Ball Blue. All grocers. Adv.

Its Fault.
"Is your new automobile all right?"
"It's pretty fair, but it will shy at horses."

Spasmodic Sermon.
A food card is a meal ticket which has joined the colors.

GOOD-BYE BACKACHE, KIDNEY AND BLADDER TROUBLES

For centuries all over the world GOLD MEDAL Haarlem Oil Capsules. They are pleasant and easy to take. Each capsule contains about one dose of five drops. Take them just like you would any pill. Take a small swallow of water if you want to. They dissolve in the stomach, and the kidneys soak up the oil like a sponge does water. They thoroughly cleanse and wash out the bladder and kidneys and throw off the inflammation which is the cause of the trouble. They will quickly relieve those stiffened joints, that backache, rheumatism, lumbago, sciatica, gallstones, gravel, "brickdust," etc. They are an effective remedy for all diseases of the bladder, kidney, liver, stomach and allied organs. Your druggist will cheerfully refund your money if you are not satisfied after a few days' use. Accept only the pure, original GOLD MEDAL Haarlem Oil Capsules. None other genuine.—Adv.

Do not delay a minute if your back aches or you are sore across the loins, or have difficulty when urinating. Go to your druggist at once and get a

Watch Your Stomach In Hot Weather

A Cool, Sweet, Strong Stomach Your Best Safeguard Against Summer Sickness

"Keep your stomach in good working order during the hot summer months and you will have little to fear in the way of sickness" the advice many physicians give as hot weather approaches.

Good, sound, common sense advice, too. For very frequently, and especially in hot weather, these common stomach disorders which so many people seem to regard as of minor importance, do open the way for serious illness.

So keep your stomach sweet, cool and comfortable all summer long. The extra work—change of diet—poisons that come with hot weather—all hit us in the stomach. The strongest stomach will need help this summer as never before.

The one easy way if you have the right remedy is to rid the stomach of too much acid. Because it's superacidity that interferes with digestion and assimilation, and this causes about all those stomach miseries you are so familiar with—heartburn, food-repeat-

ing, indigestion, sour, gassy stomach and that miserable, bloated, puffed-up condition after eating.

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