

# TELLS OF A TRIP THROUGH DESOLATED AND DEVASTATED VILLAGES OF FRANCE

Edward B. Clark Gives a Simple and Uncolored Story of Conditions As He Found Them—Responsibility for the Destruction of Many Fair Places of France One of the Things to Be Considered When Final Day of Reckoning Comes.

By EDWARD B. CLARK.  
(Staff Correspondent Western Newspaper Union.)

Sommeilles, France.—As I make a few notes in this place which once was a village the ground is shaken by the transmitted tremor imparted to the earth by the shock of the great guns which are bellowing all along the battle front from St. Mihiel to the forest of Argonne.

Sommeilles is beyond the present indicated range of the big rifles, but an elevation of an inch or two to the muzzles of the siege pieces would result in a rain of shells falling on a village, or at least the remnants of a village which already has had not a rain but a deluge of fire.

There is little chance that any gun will be elevated, for the cannoneers are too much occupied with the multitude of human targets and with the sod and beam-covered trenches immediately at their front to be willing to waste shots at the well-nigh invisible. I am here with a French army officer, Capt. Gerard de Ganay, who stands six feet three in his military boots and who looks and is a soldier. If the enemy in the trenches, battering away over the hill and the valley at our front wanted to put this officer out of the service with a shell, I doubt if it could see him, even if their range finding experts were possessed of triple-powered field glasses. The captain is arrayed in what they call "horizon blue," a color which so melts into the skyline that it becomes a part of it.

**Ruins Where Army Passed.**  
To this place I have come after a trip of two days' duration in a high-powered military motor through about twenty of the desolated and devastated



Devastated by War.

villages of France which lay in the line of advance and of retreat of a great army. In the days to come, when there is a final reckoning to fix responsibility for the destruction of these fair places of France and for the killing of more than a few noncombatants, there will be a controversy as bitter as that which has marked the battling from the Marne, the high point of the German advance, to the Aisne, where the German now is entrenched, with the Frenchman on the offensive and striking daily and boldly at his front.

Included technically within the field of war operations today is a large part of France. Virtually all the scene of the battle of the Marne is forbidden ground to all persons except those who go with proper credentials.

It is my intention to take my readers through some of these desolated places of France; to tell a simple and uncolored story of their condition today as my eyes saw them, and to repeat occasionally the words of men and of women who saw the acts of destruction and who have formed their own opinion as to the reasons therefor. One day the truth underlying all this ravage will be known. The world probably will continue to withhold its judgment, but the fact remains that a score or more of thriving French villages have perished from the earth after a manner that seemingly will not admit of the excuse or the explanation that it is simply the result of the acts of ordinary and so-called civilized warfare.

**Was Fired by Incendiaries.**  
From Vitry-le-Francois, where I left the train and took a military motor, I went first to Hurlon, or rather to the place where Hurlon once stood. The French declare that this place was burned by German incendiaries. They

hold that the absence of shell holes in the walls and the roofs of houses standing aloof, and whose interiors are scorched and blackened ruins, proves beyond cavil that the fires were set by hand. The Germans say that at this place some of the inhabitants were caught with firearms in their hands. This plea will probably enter later when all these acts are brought to the bar of man's adjudication. A it is, Hurlon virtually has disappeared from the face of the earth.

This village was proud of its Gothic Catholic church of St. Martin, which has stood here for centuries. The church is not beyond repair, but today it is literally riddled with shot and shell. Within is an undamaged shrine of Mary the Virgin, and before it women were praying for the success of the arms of France.

Not far from Hurlon stands the village of Glennes, or, again let me say, what once was Glennes. This village was destroyed utterly by shell fire, except in the cases of a few of the larger buildings. The church is badly damaged, but, like the sanctuary at Hurlon, it can be restored. I went into the churchyard at Glennes, drawn thither I think by a somewhat shadowed form of curiosity. The shells had fallen thick and fast into this place where the villagers for centuries have buried their dead. The church and cemetery are pictures of gray and black desolation. Images and monuments are shattered almost to dust. Barely one of the smaller tombstones in the cemetery is left untouched. Here, however, one sees the frequent freak of war. A great tomb stands almost in the center of the churchyard. It dominates the scene. All about it trees and headstones and footstones have been splintered and smashed, and yet the great tomb stands unmarred. Its escape is one of the mysteries of the chances of war. Within the tomb, as the inscription tells us, rests the family of Jesson Boilleau. Jesson and his family still sleep undisturbed.

**Soldiers' Sepulchers Everywhere.**  
After leaving Glennes, the country is nothing but a great graveyard. Soldiers' sepulchers are everywhere. Single graves are the exception. Ger-

be found among ruined homes, but confessedly there is momentary forgetfulness of the stricken villages when one looks on the beauty of the fields which lie between the houses of desolation.

Frignicourt has been swept from its place on the plains. Not one stone rests upon another here. Was there justification for this laying waste or was it sheer wantonness? Time perhaps will disclose the truth. I wanted to determine for myself whether or not the tales constantly told of incendiarism were true or untrue. I began to observe closely and I hit upon a means of test which I have found that already the Frenchmen have applied.

Faremont is not far from Frignicourt, and it was destroyed only in part by artillery fire. A fine highway runs through the heart of the village, and it was along this highway that the invading army passed. The houses on either side of the road and immediately confronting it have all been destroyed while the houses back of them are intact. Gunfire from a distance makes no such fine distinctions. The houses along the street were set on fire by hand.

The old church of the village of Faremont is still standing. There is a shell hole in its tower, and more breaches in the wall below.

From Faremont I passed through Favresses, Blesme and Maurupt-le-Montoy. There is little left of any one of these places to give it the right to be called a village. At Blesme there are some curious contrasts. The lowly homes of the villagers all were destroyed, but close to them an old and beautiful chateau stands unharmed amidst its trees.

**As if by Miracle.**  
At Maurupt-le-Montoy the bombardment caused heavy damage to the village church and churchyard. In the latter, where the shells had fallen thick, there is a stone cross bearing upon its marble front a representation of Saint Veronica's handkerchief, upon which, according to the Catholic belief, was imprinted the face of the Christ. In curious workmanship, upon the marble handkerchief in this cemetery, the face of the Savior was inscribed. Almost alone, this cross and this Christ stand uninjured in this shell-shattered acre of God.

Frequently stress has been laid upon the escape from injury by shell fire of representations of the Savior and the Virgin, his mother. I know, however, that these escapes are only accidental, and while it may be pleasant for the faithful to believe that immunity came to the things they hold sacred, it is only the part of truth to say that I have seen the same destruction visited upon crucifix and on shrine that fell upon other images and other sanctuaries of which Christians take less account.

At Vaubecourt such walls as still rear themselves from the ruins are shaken daily and nightly by the thunder of pounding guns. At least one-half of the Vaubecourt villagers have returned to their blasted dwellings ready again to take up life where their forefathers lived for centuries. These villagers give no heed to the trembling of the earth under their feet. The cannon shot does not disturb their dreams. Hell came here last fall.

There was terrific fighting at Vaubecourt and in the country all about it and there is still terrific fighting near at hand. The village has been battered from its foundations by shell and shot. When the time comes for answering the question of responsibility, it is probable that no fine interrogations will be raised as to whether this place was swept from the face of the earth by bombardment or deliberate incendiarism. Here, the question will concern itself with the right of the invader to put to death summarily three French soldiers whom they found in the village.

**Were Shot as Spies.**  
The cure of Vaubecourt, a priest who stayed loyally at his post, told me that the French soldiers were in uniform and in advance of the enemy's lines and that therefore they could not have been spies. The Germans, however, have said that these soldiers were spies and it was on this ground they shot them.

The priest of Vaubecourt has gathered a part of his flock together once more. He is l'Abbe Perrenot. He was sentenced to be shot by the order of the commanding officer of the invading army. He added that this officer was a good deal of a brute but that his immediate junior in command was a soldier and a gentleman. The junior, he said, secured his release. So one hears the stories and so one may or may not pass judgment as he will.

As things are, however, the village of Vaubecourt as a village of homes and houses is no more, but the people are coming back to find the May sun shining on the ruins and showing forth the ravages of a storm that has passed on a little way and which now vexes priest and villager only with its noise.

Much more has been heard in America of the destruction of the villages of Belgium than of those of France. I had no conception of the ruin that had been wrought by artillery and by fire in this part of the French republic which lies under the shadow of the Argonne forest and not only within sound but within range of some of the heavy guns as they play hourly today along the banks of the Aisne, the Meuse and the Orne. I visited a dozen places other than those of which I have written and the story of the desolation virtually is the same. It is a hard sight to look upon and a hard story to write. I turn from the last blackened picture while the roar of the distant guns reminds me that these scenes elsewhere, if fate so wills, may be reenacted in all their horror.

# RANCH TRAGEDY OF EARLY DAYS

Victim Supposed to Have Been Son of Rich Eastern Man.

## HE WAS TOO POPULAR

Treacherously Killed by Bullying Foreman Whose Jealousy Was Aroused—Bullets Removed From His Revolver.

Watonga, Okla.—One part of northwestern Oklahoma which is rich in the myths of the cowboy days is the land to the north of the Eagle Chief. Much of the early lore of romantic nature has been lost, but there are a few old-timers who vividly remember the trials of pioneer life and of the romances which, like the cattle, once covered the valley of this small stream.

The mecca for the cowmen was the frontier town of Caldwell, Kan. One of the most famous ranches along the Eagle Chief was the T-5. Every ranch had its history, many of them reading like fiction more than of the life which these big-hearted men of the plains led. Of the T-5 this story will deal.

On a hill overlooking the valley of the Eagle Chief is an almost forgotten grave.

**Johnny Potts.**  
Within the grave lie the remains of Johnny Potts. Where he came from it is not known, but those who were his friends believed him to be the son of a rich Eastern man.

One Ben Franklin was foreman on the T-5 ranch. Franklin boasted of the many men that had fallen at the point of his gun. Men who worked under him must obey; they had to work, for to be obstinate was like playing with powder over a fire.

About this time Johnny Potts appeared on the T-5 asking for work. Potts was unknown to them. He displayed signs that he was well educated and had not been raised in the rough cow camps of the West. His work on the T-5 was faultless.

He soon became very popular with the T-5 boys, which fact made for him an everlasting enemy in the person of Franklin. Many times the foreman sought a quarrel with Potts either with the intention of killing him or to have an excuse of getting

him discharged. The cowboys, knowing the dangerous nature of Franklin, warned Potts to be careful.

A few weeks later Franklin met Potts at a place in Caldwell. Franklin started to draw his revolver but before his hand had hardly reached the holster Potts had drawn his revolver and was covering the foreman. Instead of shooting Franklin he took the gun, extracted the shells, handed the gun back to its owner and told Franklin to go back to the ranch and milk the cows. Although frustrated in his attempt on Potts' life, his wounded pride demanded revenge.

**Victim of Treachery.**  
About two weeks later a dance was held at the T-5 ranch. Girls from Caldwell came as invited guests. While the dance was in full progress a visitor at the ranch came to Potts asking him for the loan of his revolver to shoot a coyote that was about to stampede the horses. The revolver was returned to the owner soon afterward. Potts did not examine the gun to see whether or not the other shells had been exploded. Later in the evening Franklin and Potts met. The former started a quarrel. Franklin drew his gun but before he could fire Potts' revolver snapped twice in the face of the foreman. Franklin fired and Potts fell dead. Someone had extracted the shells from his gun.

Franklin later escaped from the dance hall and drifted to Montana.

Potts' body lies today on the hilltop overlooking the silent stream of the Eagle Chief.

His grave is unmarked.

**Must Get Broth Elsewhere.**  
Astoria, N. Y.—Because John J. Wilson made such a fuss about his wife's inability to make Scotch broth and Scotch stew, Mrs. Wilson has been granted a year's separation from him.

# PASTURES TO SUSTAIN EVEN MILK FLOW



Field of Red Top and Timothy at New Jersey Experiment Station.

(By W. M. KELLY.)  
The time when dairy cattle can be turned out in the summer to shift for themselves has passed. Under the best conditions, the abundance of pasture grass is certain to decrease after the middle of July, and its quality also deteriorates.

To sustain an even flow of milk we must be prepared to supply additional food. A milk flow, allowed to decrease at this time, cannot be fully regained until the cow again freshens.

The cow that is giving milk, and the growing heifer, suffer a severe shock, from which they are slow to recover if compelled to fight flies and exist on semistarvation rations, in a drought-stricken pasture.

Many dairy farmers make the mistake of allowing the cows to shrink in their flow of milk, before beginning to feed the supplemental feeds.

Supplying these as soon as the pasture begins to fall, makes the change more gradual and insures an even, steady thrift of the cows, which is so essential to sustaining a large flow of milk.

Another very common mistake made by many dairy farmers is that of feeding a heavy grain ration to the cows when a bare pasture is their sole supply of rough food. Such roughage is neither palatable nor abundant enough to produce good results.

On the modern dairy farm where corn, clover and alfalfa thrive, it is unnecessary to plan an extensive and complicated system of forage crops to supplement the pastures.

The supply may be obtained by holding over ensilage or by cutting clover and alfalfa, and feeding them green in liberal quantities.

Oats, peas, rye, barley and various other crops, may be specially grown for summer feeds, but none of these crops will yield as much food as corn, clover, alfalfa and oats and peas that are raised in the regular crop rotation.

The only real advantage of growing the former feeds lies in the fact that they may be sometimes raised on land not used for growing the crops in the regular rotation.

I believe it is generally unwise to practice a complicated system of growing catch crops, when it is possible to obtain equally good results from the green feed supplied by the regular field crops.

In actual practice I have depended chiefly upon corn, oats and clover and

## TO OBTAIN A GOOD STAND OF CLOVER

Crop Will Not Succeed on Poorly Drained Soil—Lack of Fertility Reduces Yield.

Observations indicate that failure to obtain a successful stand of clover is due to a number of different causes, any one or any combination of which may react very unfavorably to its growth. The primary causes of clover failure appear to be due to depletion of the humus content of the soil and soil acidity. Clover will not succeed on poorly drained soil. Lack of fertility reduces the yield in some sections. In the spring grain sections the nurse crop should be seeded from one-half to two-thirds the usual rate.

When a full seeding of the nurse crop is made, and this is especially true of oats, the greater portion of the soil moisture is used by the grain. The clover plants thus become weakened and when the grain is cut they are killed by the hot sun before they have time to recover.

Alsike clover does well on soil which will no longer grow red clover, and where moisture is sufficient it is recommended that alsike be planted. Sweet clover or soy beans are very good soil renovators, and they may replace red clover in the rotations until the soil is in such condition that red clover will succeed.

**Test Seed Grain.**  
The business farmer of today tests his seed grain. In farming, as in every other business, elements of chance are being removed as fully as possible.

**Appetite for Mutton.**  
One thing which opposes the development of an appetite for mutton is our ignorance of the best methods of cooking it.

**Wearing Young Pigs.**  
Pigs can be weaned without check in growth, but not on corn and water. They must have good, rich protein slop and a moderate amount of corn.

**Result of Experiments Made by Virginia Experiment Station—Seed It Alone.**  
A report has been received by the department of agriculture of the results of experiments made by the Virginia station, in co-operation with the department, with alfalfa. The report shows that August seeding is preferable to spring seeding. Liming is usually necessary, even on limestone soils. Acid phosphate and basic slag have given the most marked results on alfalfa of any commercial fertilizer, especially when used in connection with a liberal application of stable manure.

At Williamsburg, in tide water, a plot seeded in September and fertilized with 10 tons of manure and 400 pounds acid phosphate per acre yielded at the rate of six tons per acre in the following year, as against two tons 356 pounds without fertilizers.

At Staunton, in the Shenandoah valley, alfalfa fertilized with 15 tons of stable manure, alone yielded six tons per acre in 1913 and 2½ tons the first cutting in 1914. The use of inoculating soil is strongly recommended over any other method. Pure cultures are a less desirable, but practicable substitute.

The experiments on rates of seeding, using from 10 to 30 pounds per acre, gave very little difference between light and heavy seedings. On a good seeded 15 pounds should be sufficient. A comparison of alfalfa seeded alone with alfalfa seeded with other grasses or clovers indicates that it is the best to seed it alone.