

AT LA CROIX ROUGE

By CATHERINE POSTELLE

PENSEE took her work and went to one corner of the long table. She drew her shoulder up high so that the woman on her right could not see. The woman at the end was giving out cloth, needles, thread and thimbles and would not notice. Six weeks it had been since she had heard. Six weeks is a long time. One could not sleep for listening, one could not eat, and if the hands trembled—

The others were different. When Pensee glanced over her hunched shoulder down the long line of faces, she saw how calm they were. They made bandages as one hems a fine table cloth, or makes a flower in the end of a towel. As for Pensee a crimson blot seemed to come in the center of the bandage she held.

That was a pretty woman who sat beside her. She was very proud. She said she had two sons in the service, officers, both of them. One was instructor in a training camp; Captain Dusil, that was. The younger had just been made lieutenant. They might go to France, she did not know. One must be prepared for that.

A woman at the other end of the table began talking in a loud voice. Pensee had never seen her before. She had auburn hair much waved and curled and a very large nose, and her fingers sparkled as she drew out her thread. "If I had a dozen sons—"

There was a clattering noise, someone had let the big shears fall. Pensee started. Her heart beat so fast. She did not know why she was such a fool.

"If I had a dozen sons," the red woman began again—she had a scarlet coat hanging from her shoulders—"it is at the front I would wish them, every one—at the front."

Pensee tried not to hear. She wished to shut her ears with her fingers, but she was afraid someone would see. The words seemed to pierce inside her heart—"at the front."

A little woman looked up from her sewing. Pensee saw a tear fall on her bandage. She had a timid voice, but the words seemed wrung from her lips as she looked down the long table. "How many sons—how many sons have you at the front?"

The red woman stared. "How many? Oh! I have none. God did not give me any children. But if I had, I would give all to my country." She shook out the folds of her scarlet coat and patted her hair with her glittering fingers.

"My God!" thought Pensee, "how brave she is, and I have but one and God knows—" She could not thread her needle and the crimson blot on her bandage seemed to grow and grow.

"We must give to the last—to the very last one. Noblesse oblige." It was Madame Charleton who spoke. She was very old. She had had many sons. They were all dead. Long ago they had gone away, one after the other, in little white coffins. Mad-

ame Charleton went every Sunday with flowers for the row of little graves. "My God!" thought Pensee again, "but she has forgotten. She is very old."

"All my time I give," the red woman began again, "seven sweaters, and casques and socks, oh! innumerable. I hate a—a slacker as I hate a coward, a woman who weeps."

Pensee cowered over her work, she hunched her shoulders higher. What if they knew of her tears? What if the red woman knew that when the postman turned in the little gate she ran and stopped her ears lest— But six weeks! God had made her so, very little and with such a heart that it trembled at every sound. These were brave women at La Croix Rouge.

Pensee looked again at the woman with the sparkling fingers. She hid her own knotted hands under the cloth. Working had made them like that, working for papa and Alcide, papa and Alcide, all she had in the world.

A small, dark woman with blowsy hair blustered into the room. Her voice was high and shrill. It struck Pensee's ears like blows from a hammer. She had a paper in her hand which she shook at the women at the table. "The Americans are at the front. It is Pershing's casualty list. I thought you would wish to hear. Thirteen wounded. Only six killed. No one that we know. But one from this state. Alcide—Alcide—the print is bad—looks like Condigny—something like that."

Pensee dropped forward forward on the table as from a mortal wound. No one noticed. The women were counting the work, folding, sorting it away. Pensee was blind and sick to death. Somewhere in France—a battlefield—Alcide lying there, dying alone, trampled upon,—dead, stiff and stark and cold—and she so tender of him all the years of his life, brooding over him with fond and foolish ways. Oh! God had made her so. She lay quite still, stricken with an uncompromising wound.

Then suddenly as with a rush of wings something swept over her. To the front, to the ultimate sacrifice he had gone—to his death—her son—he had kept nothing back. Oh! She knew, laughing and brave to the last. He had given his gift as a king gives a ransom, freely, carelessly,—a lustrous deed—her son, worthy of some great strong mother who with such freedom could give her gift, who could make her sacrifice with such splendid generosity.

Pensee lifted her face—sore stricken—oh! if one's country demands a son, one must look like that. The women saw. They huddled about her. "Oh! was it her son? Oh, was it your son? Oh, what shall we do?" The bravest began to weep. The red woman knelt at her feet and buried her face on Pensee's knees. They swayed to and fro and moaned as women do.

Pensee stood up. Oh! as a trem-

bling acacia she trembled. Her voice shook in her throat, yet when she spoke it was as though she proclaimed a triumph, as of old one proclaimed a victory with wreaths and processions and triumphal arches.

"It is my son, Alcide. He is more dear than seven sons. Somewhere in France—it is for his country—he is kill!"—Reedy's Mirror.

"HER UNBORN CHILD"

A PLAY based upon eugenics—the theme being nothing other than birth control—is scheduled for a week's run at the Salt Lake theater commencing Monday night, June 3.

For the third time in one year "Her Unborn Child" has been announced for the local road-attraction playhouse, but it is promised there is "magic in the numeral three," and Salt Lakers will be accorded the privilege of passing judgment on the play with so jarring a title.

With a theme just as potent as that of "The Blindness of Virtue," the author of "Her Unborn Child" has sought to solve a big modern problem, and it is stated the subject is handled delicately and in a manner that does not give offense to the most sensitive person.

It is to be expected that the stage, one of the great educators, would take up this subject so prominently before the public nowadays, and, no doubt a new angle is given the question.

There are to be given three matinee performances during the local engagement, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday, the two former being devoted exclusively for the ladies. The Saturday matinee, as well as the evening performances, will be open to both sexes, although no one under sixteen years of age will be admitted.

Despite the fact that this attraction comes with a drawing power record known to every theater manager in the land, there is somewhat of a prejudice on the part of the going public against what is termed "popular priced" shows, yet this one seems to be the exception to the rule, as the cast embraces names well established in the profession. If this was not true, it would be a business oversight to have booked the play for so extended an engagement.

Colonel—Our general was splendid. He retired without losing a man or a flag or a gun!

Citizen—So I've heard—or a minute!

THE SPECTATOR

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versy is a celebrated sculptor—temperamental at times, I suppose, as all successful men of his profession usually are—while the other party is a hard-headed business man who is now taking a flier in politics and who happens to be just a bit eccentric at times. As I view the matter, their differences would have been sufficiently difficult to compose at best, and when a third person, possessing such inexplicable whims as characterize Judge Colburn,

horns in, then it's high time to throw up your hands. Why not put the three in the ring at Hardy Downing's bout-fest next Monday evening and let them fight it out? That would be the best way to settle it.

THE gravity of the war situation was emphasized a short time ago by Lloyd George, Prime Minister of Great Britain, in the following appeal:

"We are at the crisis of the war, attacked by an immense superiority of German troops. Our army has been forced to retire. The retirement has been carried out methodically before the pressure of a steady succession of fresh German reserves, which are suffering enormous losses.

"The situation is being faced with splendid courage and resolution. The dogged pluck of our troops has for the moment checked the ceaseless onrush of the enemy, and the French have joined in the struggle. But this battle, the greatest and most momentous in the history of the world, is only just beginning. Throughout it the British and French are buoyed with the knowledge that the great Republic of the West will neglect no effort which can hasten its troops and its ships to Europe.

"In war, time is vital. It is impossible to exaggerate the importance of getting American reinforcements across the Atlantic in the shortest possible space of time."

This expression of one of the most prominent figures in war activities abroad shows the necessity of every one doing everything in his power to aid the United States in furnishing the necessary sinews to place our soldiers in the field. To do this money must be had and in amounts that appear fabulous.

Three issues of Liberty Bonds have been taken, largely oversubscribed. Another popular loan is now before the country in the War Savings Stamps, the baby Liberty Bonds. This loan is two billion dollars. The intention was to carry it through this year but it has now been decided to float the loan by June 28, which date has been decided as National War Savings Day.

Utah has been allotted \$9,000,000 of this two billion dollar loan which means \$20 for every man, woman and child in the state, including Indians and aliens. It means \$3,400,000 from Salt Lake county. To make up this allotment an intensive campaign will begin on June 10. Pledge cards will be handed every one on which can be designated the amount of War Savings Stamps the individual will purchase during the seven months of the current year remaining. It is the intention to make a house to house canvass. We may have to sacrifice in order to purchase War Savings Stamps but all are sacrificing now.

Utah must go over the top in the "Baby Bond" drive, but to accomplish this result it will be necessary for every Utahn to put his shoulder to the wheel and buy War Savings Stamps and then buy more in pledges to the government which may be taken up every month. We have got to get that nine millions in a hurry.