

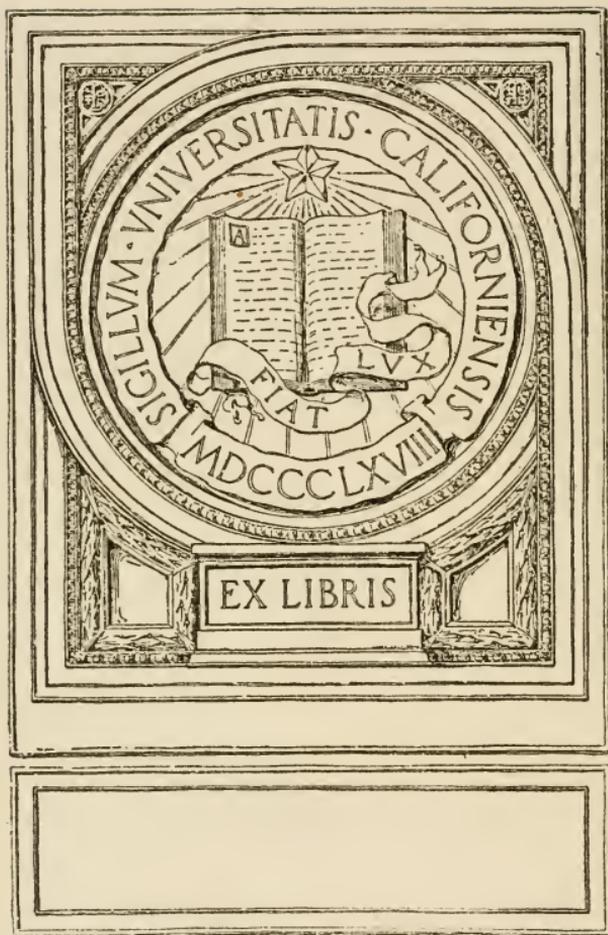
AN ENGLISH GIRL'S
ADVENTURES
IN
HOSTILE GERMANY

MARY LITTLEFAIR

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AN ENGLISH GIRL'S ADVENTURES
IN HOSTILE GERMANY

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An
English Girl's Adventures
in Hostile Germany

By
Mary Littlefair



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An English Girl's Adventures in Hostile Germany

I

IN COLOGNE

JUNE and July in Germany, 1914, were months of summer heat and sunshine, and many were the happy days spent in the country near Cologne, where I had been for two months with the von Fichtenwalds who were living at the time at their summer residence, a beautiful old "Burg," or manor-house, on a lovely estate. Then, soon after the assassination of the Austrian Crown Prince and Princess came rumours of war—of impending hostilities between Austria and Servia—and the people waited with anxiety for Russia's action in the matter. If she would not be persuaded to remain neutral, they said, then Germany would be drawn into the war in support of Austria.

I shall never forget the three slow, awful days before the war, each one overshadowed

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by a feeling of intolerable suspense, with the ominous atmosphere intensified by oppressive heat. With each succeeding day the probability and fear of war grew greater, mornings and evenings alternating between hope of continued peace and a growing anticipation of the great war-clouds threatening to overtake us, and creeping rapidly nearer with insidious stealth.

"I have six brothers who will have to go," said Frau von Fichtenwald in a voice of quiet despair—"and my eldest son!"

Lisbeth the cook, on the other hand, laughed about it all. She had numerous relations—brothers, brothers-in-law, uncles and cousins—all of whom would have to fight, but she seemed to find the idea amusing.

Situated as we were, only an hour's journey from Cologne, we very quickly heard the news as it varied from hour to hour during the day. There was then no thought of England taking a part in the possible war. "You look anxious, Misschen," said Frau von Fichtenwald to me one lunch-time when first the horrible rumours were beginning to assume something of reality; "but you need not fear for England, for she will not fight. She will sit and look on till the war is over, and then she will walk in and seize the plums as usual!" They used to wonder why we had ever arranged the Entente

Cordiale, "for we don't see that you and the French have so very much in common," they said, "or that you are on the whole very fond of them."

In the event of war, we were going to remove to the town house in Cologne, so on Friday morning, July 31st, we motored over intending to go to the Exhibition there and see to arrangements in the house at the same time. The day was very hot, and the drive to Cologne was delightfully refreshing; but arrived there, Fräulein von Fichtenwald complained of a bad headache, and the visit to the Exhibition had to be given up. I had the morning free, so decided to go to the station and look out for my two brothers and two sisters as they travelled through on their way to the Schwarzwald, where they were supposed to join our parents, who would be coming from their "cure" at Bad Nauheim to spend a fortnight at Gutach, one of the picturesque villages of the Black Forest. I scarcely expected to see the four under the circumstances, but as I had heard nothing to the contrary from them or my parents, I waited on the chance of their being, after all, in the Hook of Holland Express.

The station was crowded with holiday-makers, though whether homeward or out-

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ward bound I could not tell, for there were still many people who scarcely thought with any seriousness of impending war, and that morning there were again faint hopes of peace, though the air was electric with expectancy, as official telegrams might arrive at any moment. In the streets there was a forced stillness and calm. The public tried to attend to ordinary business and occupations just as usual, and awaited further developments in affairs with as much patience as they could summon; but any military-looking official at a street corner who might be expected to have unpublished information was immediately surrounded by a group of loiterers who tried to extract from him either the latest news or his valued opinions, while other leisured individuals watched with breathless interest the numbers of odd soldiers and officers threading their way through the busy thoroughfares.

The train sailed in nearly an hour and a half late; but at last I caught sight of four familiar, if travel-stained faces at one of the carriage windows. I said I was really rather surprised to see them at all when we had saluted, but they told me they had been assured when they booked their tickets that it would be perfectly safe to go abroad, and that they had had no letter from Nauheim to

warn them against coming, so they had confidently proceeded on their journey. As a matter of fact, a telegram from the parents advising them not to leave home, and announcing their own intention of returning at once to England, had arrived the morning after they had started, and letters and post-cards to me, as I afterwards found, had also been delayed.

On the way back to the Domstrasse at twelve o'clock I looked to see what new notices were posted up. "The last reports of German mobilization and the diplomatic mission of Prince Heinrich to St. Petersburg are entirely false!" I read. That was all.

"I should think you would like to go back to the country after lunch," said Frau von Fichtenwald when I returned. "There's more to amuse you there, and nothing particular to do here, as Hildegard's headache is not better. What a pity we did not know sooner that your people were going to the Schwarzwald to-day. It would not have been a bad idea if you had gone with them, for you might like to be all together while affairs are in this unsettled state."

And, as it happened, I might just as well have accompanied the family party to Gutach in the morning, for within ten minutes of my

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return to the country house a telephone message came to say that Germany was declared to be in a state of war, and was actually mobilizing. Frau von Fichtenwald thought my parents would therefore prefer to have me with them during the disquiet and excitement, and I had better join them in the Schwarzwald at once. If I left the house at four o'clock, taking only necessary luggage with me, I could catch a train to Cologne, and from there one at six-thirty to Frankfurt, where I should spend the night at her brother's, going on to Gutach by the first train next morning.

This was startling news; but there was no time to waste wondering about it. One of the maids who was to help in arranging and putting the town house in order would be going to Cologne by the same train, also the butler who had to go off to his regiment at once. The rest of the servants, including Lisbeth who looked pallid and laughed no more, set to and began packing up the silver and household linen as quickly as they could. I myself flew upstairs, hastily flung necessaries and my most treasured possessions into two small boxes with the help of an obliging Abigail, swallowed a cup of tea, and seizing violin and handbag, met my two travelling companions in the hall, all of us driving off to the station four

miles distant within three-quarters of an hour of the alarm.

Soldiers were already bivouacking at every station and guarding the tunnels down the line. Cologne station was even fuller than in the morning, this time seething with officers and men going to join their regiments; but the crowds were quite orderly and not at all panic-stricken, though it was heartrending to see the white, miserable faces of the women. We had an endless wait before we could get my luggage registered, and in the meantime I went to the Domstrasse close by, where Frau von Fichtenwald had left a message for me. I found that as well as a note full of all sorts of thoughtful instructions for the journey and her brother's address, she had left twenty shillings in gold, for which I was very grateful as paper money was no longer being accepted, and nearly all that I had was in notes. Frau von Fichtenwald herself with her husband and daughter had already motored over to Bonn to say farewell to her son.

The Frankfurt train was very crowded, but I managed to squeeze into a corner seat. Finding that the telegraph service was now reserved for military use only, I gave up the idea of communicating my movements to my family, and settled down in the hope of now

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having a chance to get cool after the awful rush. All around there was an air of busy preparation, which thanks to the perfect organization of everything was, in spite of the sudden upheaval and agitation, entirely free of confusion.

My fellow-passengers were all Germans, and above the rumble of the train I caught scraps of conversation about the war, with now and then a mention of England. It seemed they thought it more to her advantage to remain neutral, and that she would probably do so, but it was difficult to judge if an attitude of impartial friendliness was to be counted upon. Now, however, was the time to show what was England's real feeling with regard to Germany.

At Coblenz the two men who had been discussing this point got out, but the carriage filled up again at once. Other trains in the stations on the line were packed with troops travelling in various directions. Very soon the conversation became more general in our compartment, and everyone began the usual friendly advances towards his neighbour with inquiries as to his destination, and on this occasion his immediate or future plans. The lady opposite me opened the attack with a smile, which I returned.

“Is Fräulein travelling as far as Frankfurt, too?” she asked next.

I said I was.

“Does Fräulein reside there?”

“No,” I replied; “I’m only going there for the night, and then on to Gutach in the Schwarzwald to-morrow early.”

At that everybody in the carriage looked concerned, and said there were rumours that all civilian train-service would be stopped after midnight; they doubted whether I should ever reach Gutach if I waited till morning before going on. I had already begun to regret having to lose time by staying in Frankfurt, and now thought seriously of abandoning the plan altogether; there would most likely be somebody to meet me on the platform there to whom I could explain the risk of delay, for I had been told to wave my hand to make myself recognized as soon as the train arrived in at the platform.

One of the men now asked a guard in the corridor if there was any truth in the rumours, or might one travel safely after midnight and expect to arrive at his destination some time? He told him that he really could not say—he knew nothing definite; but in any case train-service would be discontinued very shortly.

“Have you, then, relations in Gutach?”

asked the lady, when our friend had returned with this information.

“My parents are there,” I said.

“Ach! then there’s no question in the matter. Don’t hesitate, Fräulein; go on at once while you can,” she urged, laying her hand impressively on my knee, while her husband produced a time-table from his bag and looked out my trains and connections for me.

“Fräulein is English—yes? I will look after you and see to everything for you when we reach Frankfurt,” said the man who had spoken to the guard. “Have no fear; we will see that you catch your train.”

And indeed, when I leant out of the window and saw the dense crowd all over the huge station, I felt only too grateful for the proffered help, for everybody seemed intent on assisting and comforting his neighbour that evening, and I had no feeling save of confidence and great relief that I should not have to fight my way through alone.

There was no answer to my waving hand from the platform, and nobody past the barrier who appeared to be expecting anyone, so we went on a fruitless search for a porter to fetch the luggage for us, and then wended our way towards the large hall, where my companion left me to guard the handbags while he vanished

down hidden haunts to find any sort of out-porter who could be persuaded to rescue the rest of the luggage. He reappeared in a few minutes, accompanied not by a porter, but a friend who had just met him, and in whose care he said he would now have to leave me, as he was obliged to go on elsewhere. I thanked him very much for his kindness, and after we had parted his friend led the way to a refreshment-room, telling me to wait there till he returned with my ticket and, perchance, my luggage.

In a quarter of an hour he came to fetch me, but he had been unable to find my boxes, as a great deal of luggage had never left Cologne; there was nothing to be done but to telegraph for it afterwards. We then pushed our way through the crowd to find the right platform, and there we had to take leave of one another, for none except travellers were allowed beyond the barrier; so, with warm thanks for his trouble from me, and wishes for a pleasant journey from him, we went our different ways.

I had my doubts as to the "pleasant journey," judging by the throng of would-be passengers waiting on the platform for the train, which was the last one bound for Basel. Some Americans chatting cheerfully were sitting on their boxes, for there was barely standing

room, and other German travellers with closed eyes were crouching over odd pieces of luggage, seeming to doze amidst the noise and bustle. I took up my stand near a woman with her husband, who was carrying a patient, sleepy little boy of three years old on his arm. Of course, we were soon discussing the situation and comparing notes on our destinations.

"We are having to return home as quickly as possible," she said; "have you any relations going to the Front, Fräulein?"

"No," I said; "but friends."

"Ach!" she exclaimed, full of sympathy; then with a wistful look at her husband, "and my good man is going!"

It was one o'clock when at last the train was shunted into the station, and then the rush of the many hopeful passengers to board it was fearful; I really thought I should be killed in the fray. "More room to the front—to the front!" yelled some of the wiser combatants. "To the front!" I screamed too, the words jerked out of me like the squeak of a toy animal when pressure is applied, for somebody's box was flattening my chest in front, and behind the end of a valise belonging to a fighter at my back was digging in between my shoulder-blades. After a fierce struggle, however, I managed to extricate myself from

the scrambling mass with the aid of my violin, which is a splendid weapon on occasion, either as bludgeon or buffer.

In the front carriages calm prevailed, but there was no room, every seat was occupied to the last inch; eventually I found an open space in the corridor and settled myself there, using my handbag to sit upon and the violin-case as head support, feeling rather exhausted but very triumphant.

At last we started, and were soon flying over country, stopping only at large towns—Darmstadt, dark and silent; Friedrichsfelde, where a woman outside the carriage-door was sobbing and moaning, clinging distractedly to a rather mournful-looking and embarrassed young man as if she could never let go; and Heidelberg, where students crowded in singing songs.

After Karlsruhe, a Belgian girl came along the corridor, and, seeing me in my lowly position, told me there was now a vacant seat in her compartment. She was returning home from Berlin by some circuitous route, and during the journey prattled in a harmless, bantering tone about the war to her neighbour, a man who said he was over age for the army.

About 4.30 the day began to dawn, first grey, then softening into opalescent colours, a blanket of mist stretching over the country,

so that we could not distinguish the landscape through which we were passing. A little later the Mass bells began ringing from all the country churches round, and the daylight broadened with the breaking out of the sun, breathing nought but the most exquisite peace and the stillness preceding the joy of a sunny summer's day—the 1st of August! It was impossible to imagine war in the face of all that beauty, and the hideous excitement and unreality of the previous night seemed to be left far behind, and to have faded away with the darkness.

Five o'clock a.m. saw us at Offenburg, where I had to exchange the express for the little Schwarzwald local railway, a small train affording but primitive travelling accommodation (3rd and 4th the only choice of class), and looking for all the world like the sixpenny toy-train of nursery days. A number of yokels climbed in with me—enormous, well-grown, unwashed-looking fellows, calm, not to say cheery, talking no word of war. My spirits rose considerably, and a tiny spark of hope made itself felt in my doubting heart—perhaps, after all, I had fancied more than was true about the war, perhaps in the town it was possible that the excitement had been exaggerated?

The country round about Offenburg was lovely beyond words, its beauty all the more fascinating in the charm of the early morning sun, with the wreaths of mist draping the mountain heights and hovering over the valleys. We crossed bubbling streams and running rivers, passed wonderful little brown and yellow peasant houses with overhanging thatched roofs dotted about on green slopes or perched on the hillsides, crawled through copses of brooding blue-green pines, and emerged into the sunlight again to see a quaint little village before our eyes, with its inhabitants standing at the railway gates, scratching an ear in true rural, meditative fashion, then onwards again past other villages nestling round their simply-built churches, their spires peering above the roofs of the houses, till at last we arrived at Gutach, a beautiful spot, but thrice beautiful in being for a brief while at least my haven and journey's end.

II

IN THE SCHWARZWALD

THE first day of August was as lovely as the promise of it had been. A sky of the intensest blue I have ever seen reigned over the landscape with its varied contrasts of colour stretched peacefully below—dark, pine-covered mountain slopes and summits, ruddy brown streams rollicking through flower-starred meadows in the valley, and ancient peasant houses with bright-coloured shutters and gay window-boxes.

A great friend of mine—Rose-Marie—was staying in Gutach with her aunt, the widow of a celebrated Schwarzwald artist, and I went to her first, for it seemed a pity to disturb the others so early after their long journey. The Frau Professor lived in a picturesque cottage with a shady garden where we had breakfast. During that repast her little nephew, who lived with his parents farther on in the village, strolled in.

“Well, Fritz, any news or gossip going?” asked Rose-Marie.

“The miller says he thinks we shall have war,” he announced; “but the others say he always was a pessimist, and there’s no further news yet.”

The prospect looked brighter, I thought; it was very perplexing, but perhaps “mobilizing” only stood for a last stern threat, not business. The sunlight flashed through the leaves of the peach-trees across the breakfast-table, and played with the gold in Rose-Marie’s hair; everywhere one saw joyous, vivid beauty, from the radiant blue of the sky overhead to the varying lights and shades on the hills, and Browning’s words,

“God’s in His Heaven,
All’s right with the world,”

seemed as if they *must* be true.

When we went to the inn later, we found the four travellers whom I had greeted at Cologne the day before in the hotel garden at breakfast, which consisted of coffee, delicious rolls, butter with a vague but fascinating flavour of sourness, and dark green pine-honey, rather poisonous in appearance, but like nectar to the palate. Christine and Winifred, indeed, had finished, but Ralph and David,

schoolboys of thirteen and fourteen, were still doing justice to the good things provided.

One does not sit long over the first breakfast in a new country, however, and we were soon exploring the neighbourhood, accompanied by Rose-Marie's cousin Hans, a sixteen-year-old youth of a refined and attractive ugliness, and a most angelic disposition. We walked through the picturesque village, passed the new "Rathaus," or Town Hall, and saw the old one that had done duty before, a long, low and rambling wooden house with overhanging eaves. The trim little church stood back from the road at a bend where it led to more old cottages, whose cats and dogs, hens and ducks occupied porches and doorways; and in one sat a paralyzed child crocheting in some miraculous way with her mouth.

Christine was yearning to begin sketching at once, but she had to postpone this pleasure for some hours at least, the morrow being Sunday, when public sketching would arouse the disapproval of the inhabitants. On our way home Hans took us over one of the oldest houses, with the kind permission of the owner, a wrinkled peasant who complacently read his paper the while and took no part in proceedings, even as showman. The kitchen was the room that struck us most; it was low-ceilinged,

the walls and beams black and thickly caked over with generations of smoke and soot, for there was no chimney above the stove burning an open fire, only a tiny slit of glass in the window slid back to let out a little of the peat-smoke that clouded the small room and made our eyes stream, so that after a very brief survey we retired choking and weeping. This impressionist visit was followed by one to the cool, dark cow-house which adjoined the living-rooms; thus one enormous roof shelters both family and cattle.

The afternoon papers brought threatening news, and the villagers now began to think that war would be inevitable. After tea we went for a walk in the forest with Rose-Marie, but did not go out of earshot of the village, for we expected we might hear the church-bell or a bugle-call proclaim war at any minute. At last, about six o'clock, a faint sound reached our ears, and we hurried down into the village to find the Mayor surrounded by the population before the Town Hall, where he was reading aloud the Declaration of War and various official notices to recruits as to when and where they were to join their regiments, also the ages of those who would have to enlist. The women wept and clung to their menfolk, and the children stood round with

open mouths; there was general consternation, for all knew that there was now no drawing back—war was upon them in grim reality.

Rose-Marie, being a Red Cross Sister, had to return home to Berlin immediately, there to await further orders from headquarters, and went to pack at once in order to catch the first train leaving in the morning, which would probably be the last running. We, as civilians and foreigners, were bound to remain where we were for a fortnight. What our parents were doing, or where they might be, we had no idea; for neither the morning, afternoon, nor evening train had deposited them in Gutach according to our expectations, since they had not arrived with the others the day before as arranged; neither had we heard from them by telegram or postcard, only Rose-Marie had received a card to say that none of our family would be coming to Gutach, things being in such an unsettled state they thought it best to proceed home, which boded ill for us now detained here. However, all we could do for the present was to wait and hope that they might just come by the late evening train. In this, though, we were again disappointed.

The following day, Sunday, I was up at day-break to see Rose-Marie away on her journey

to Berlin. Morning mists were curling about the mountain peaks, tearing themselves through the pine-tree tops, while overhead the sky showed blue—another beautiful day! Later on the country people, all dressed in peasant costume, were to be seen straggling along the highroad, for church was at nine. I followed them, and found a corner in one of the high-backed, narrow-seated pews. In front and behind on my side of the aisle were rows and rows of female heads decked with the uniform black-and-white hats, ornamented with either red or black decorations of a woolly-ball nature round the crown, and with the fine black lace under-bonnet which somehow lends such charm to the lines of the face. All the men sat on the opposite side by themselves, according to the usual custom in German country churches.

The hymns were chosen from those in the Prayer-Book suitable for Times of Trouble. They were chastening, though not gloomy, and were full of faith and confidence, as was also the sermon, which had for its subject the ravaging wolf attacking the fold, meant to be an obvious reference to the events of the moment.

After church the congregation dispersed soberly and sadly, and repaired to the *Gasthäuser*, or inns in the village for light refresh-

ments before walking home in the heat. We sallied forth with Hans into the woods, and armed with books and mouth-organs, not to mention Hans' beribboned mandoline, found a charming spot overlooking the toy-like village in front, while behind us we might have peeped down a green glade dipping steeply between two pine copses, where a peasant girl lay on the slope guarding a couple of goats. High up among the pines we sat in the bracken listening to Hans' songs which he accompanied on his mandoline, and all was full of idyllic beauty.

But Sunday passed with no sign nor word of the parents. *Could* they really have returned to England as they had told Rose-Marie they intended doing, or had they not received her answering card to say that their children had already arrived at Gutach? With our scanty purses, the first was rather a harrowing thought.

I think Monday was the fateful day that saw Christine arrested for the first time. How nervous we used to grow in the days that followed her second arrest, whenever she was absent from us for more than an hour! For we always feared she would be certain to return accompanied by some guardian angel in official garb—adventures usually fell to her lot. I

passed her after tea on Monday, happily painting a picturesque cottage with her back to the railway running close by, as I was on my way to make inquiries after my missing luggage. This had not turned up yet, to my extreme discomfort, possessing as I did, with the exception of a few oddments in my faithful handbag, only what I stood up in. Nothing had been heard of my boxes, however, and returning from this fruitless errand, I beheld Christine no longer smiling among the grasses, but found her sitting disconsolately at one of the tin tables in the hotel garden, with a sleek and kindly soldier in attendance. It seems she was not allowed to paint so near the railway, and a soldier, chancing to pass that way and noticing her, had marched her away to the station where they had their headquarters. The sergeant in charge there looked amused at the culprit, told her captor to release her wrists, and asked her where she had come from. Christine gave the name of our inn, and they, thinking for some reason she was French, sent an Alsatian soldier to escort her back to the hotel and do the parleying, giving her to understand that she was let off with a caution, and might even be permitted to keep the sketch with the approval of their superior officer, who would doubtless come in a day or two to look

into the matter. Alas! to our intense disappointment he never came!

Since painting was now out of question, Christine amused herself the next morning by prowling through the village, and with a view to future memory sketches, peered closely at the little houses she might not at present commit to paper. A small boy, however, watched her movements with suspicion, with the result that she was again waylaid and button-holed, this time by the police. The village was thrilled; every window framed a family of faces all anxious to see the mysterious captive, for the small boy had spread the news that papa had caught a Russian spy. Rather, perhaps, to their regret, Christine was able to give a satisfactory account of herself and her circumstances, and returned home in amiable conversation with the zealous chief constable, who, as Fritz's father told us afterwards, though one of the best of fellows, was the biggest fool in the village. Herr Wohlrab, the landlord of the inn, stood us in very good stead in these predicaments, making many a helpful and needful explanation on our behalf.

Just before dinner the same day a tall woman appeared in the dining-room and said we should "komm wis her to the Burgomeister." What

now ? we all wondered. It was no new trouble or difficulty, though, but rather a way of escape from our former ones, for the order had gone forth that all foreigners should be given passports stating their names, nationality, status, and their business in the neighbourhood. The lady, who lived in the village and had heard about us, now offered to go with us and help us in the transaction of passports, as she could speak English. She was at liberty to come with us any time we liked, she said. The Burgomeister would be in his office at the Town Hall either now or at three o'clock. We voted to go then and there, but old Fräulein Schmidt, our only fellow-guest, overhearing our designs, begged us to choose the afternoon hour. "Deener ees now ready—but qvite ready," she pleaded pathetically. "Do not let us vait now ; he vill becomm so cold !"

So we postponed our interview till three o'clock, and were then received by the Burgomeister, an elderly man with a kindly, wrinkled face, shrewd blue eyes, and a thin mouth, and who was wearing the usual black velvet coat lined with bright red cloth worn by the peasantry. He wrote out our names, birth-place, and occupation—summer holiday-making—on separate sheets of paper, duly stamped with the municipal seal, and handed them to

us, telling us that we must produce them any time on demand.

To our great relief, a telegram two days old had come in the morning from the parents to say that they were in Nauheim, and like us would have to stay where they were for the present. Our answer was an urgent request for money.

The following day—Wednesday, August 5th—came an unexpected blow. We were all sitting in the garden after dinner when Hans brought the afternoon paper which announced that England had declared war on Germany. We rushed to the Burgomeister's house next door and asked him if he thought it could be true. He said he himself did not believe it; it was probably only a newspaper scare. But alas! within an hour we had proof enough of the truth of the report, for two soldiers, armed with rifles, arrived on the scene to search our boxes. Ralph and David were both out behind the house, and since we were all obliged to be present during the inspection of our belongings, I went to fetch them in; but Christine told me afterwards that the warriors imagined I had taken fright and run away, and would have pursued me!

They began their business by searching Christine's things, first carefully propping

their weapons against the bedroom doorpost. They found nothing of particular note except a letter of advice on dosing her dogs, which Herr Wohlrab, knowing English, had to read through and assure them it was not of military importance; also her camera, which, with Winifred's, Ralph's, and David's, was strung up and dumped in a corner, to be taken away for official examination in the neighbouring town. Winifred's room came next, where they turned over everything discreetly and almost apologetically, but found nothing, and proceeded to the boys' room. Here there was a box of night-lights on the table which first attracted their attention. Oh those night-lights! how gingerly they fingered them! Might they not perchance be bombs or fuzes? But no. They passed on to the trunks. A toy telescope came to light among David's belongings. Ha! field-glasses—scouting apparatus? One soldier applied it to his eye, the while his friend plunged amid a hopeless medley of socks, pyjamas, and other treasures, but failed to understand the workings of the fascinating toy, till David, in his obliging little way, assisted him to screw it to focus, and explained that one had to take the cap off the end before one could see through it. The sight of them both solemnly testing and fidgeting with

this harmless plaything was almost too much for our gravity, and, in spite of the gloom and heaviness of our hearts, we could scarcely keep straight faces.

Both soldiers were at last convinced that we were an innocent lot, though till Herr Wohlrab had reassured them, they regarded with marked suspicion the boys' last term's arithmetic and geography examination questions, which valued papers they had had to turn out of their pockets.

We were warned, just to be on the safe side, not to go into the village nor to be heard talking English, and if we went out, to keep to the woods behind the hotel. Considering that one hot-head in the village had said that if he saw those two young English boys showing themselves there he would smash their heads, we felt no desire to disobey, and in any case, it was much too hot to stir a foot beyond the garden before the late afternoon.

But what distressed us most was the loss of honour we supposed England to have suffered, for we honestly believed that we had reason to be bitterly ashamed of her, and that we could never hold up our heads as an honourable nation again. There was our proud country allied with those hordes of Russian barbarians, said Herr Wohlrab, not to mention

the treacherous French, who, we were given to understand, were skirmishing on the frontier without ever having declared war; and now England—even great England, renowned for fair play, generosity, and diplomacy—was up in arms against hard-pressed Germany. They had thought better things of her; but she had deliberately frustrated Germany's efforts to maintain peace, and was fighting solely from motives of jealousy, hatred, and malice. That was what our mad, self-seeking Ministers had brought us to! The Germans themselves had been so disgusted at this perfidy that after England's declaration of war they had flung all scruples aside, and goaded to outrage by her example, had marched upon Belgium!

"Of course, you can't help what your country does," observed Herr Wohlrab while recounting to us the above fairy-tales; "but we are now angrier with England than we ever were with France, for we think she has played a shabby, dirty trick!"

He used to visit us at supper-time to tell us whatever news had been reported, and to harangue us on our much-maligned country, to which, although we might squirm and boil inwardly, we had to keep a silent, docile tongue—firstly because, being in entire ignorance of the real state of affairs, we could only suppose

that what he told us must be regrettably true, and secondly because we knew, and knew that he knew, we could not pay the bill, for my father had written to say that he was short of cash, and could only send a cheque—would the landlord accept that? Herr Wohlrab told us he was very sorry he could not, as cheques were not being honoured at the banks, and who knew when the war would be over?

Was it any wonder that from liking his cheerful, open countenance, we grew to hate the sight of it, and avoided it as much as we decently could! Not but what he was always kindness itself, as indeed everybody was, which made us feel very worms. Almost immediately England had declared war, Rose-Marie's father, a General in the German Army, wrote to the Burgomeister, commending us to his especial care and protection from difficulty and annoyance, saying that he knew us well, we were friends of Germany and quite harmless. Then Hans' mother or her sister used to visit us almost daily, bringing books, flowers, or fruit with them, and were always ready with advice and condolence; Hans himself was messenger-in-chief, managed our telegraphic communications to Nauheim for us, or took the boys out with him, and we always knew they were safe and happy with him. I

think these many kindnesses and considerations went a long way to strengthening a Micawber-like belief that something would always "turn up" in emergencies, and that nothing could go very far wrong.

In our uncomfortable state of insolvency we resolved to economise in the only way open to us and forego coffee in the afternoons, which was an extra on the bill. As luck would have it, we were usually ravenously hungry at four o'clock, and found the interval between dinner and supper at seven o'clock very long indeed. Accordingly we brought bags and envelopes to the dinner-table as a regular thing, and slipped our pudding therein—generally a sort of fancy cake or tart, and therefore portable—this, of course, after the winsome barmaid, who was in and out during the other three courses, had departed. Dressed in her short black skirt, black velvet gold-laced corslet, coloured neckerchief, and white, short-sleeved blouse, she used to stand with arms akimbo and smilingly watch us feed, after wishing us "Guten Appetit!" or hearkened with amaze to our raucous ditties and sounds of cheerful song between the courses.

On the stroke of 3.30 we toiled up to the pine-forest, carrying the pudding, plums, Christine's painting-flask providing two pulls

of water each, books and mosquito-cream, etc., etc., and then, having ascended the steep height and found an opening in the thickly-growing pines through which we could watch the happenings of the village in the distance, we sank down gratefully on the smooth carpet of pine-needles. After that, the unbroken silence told of human beings steadily occupied in appeasing a healthy hunger. The last crumbs and the last drops of water vanished, we waxed drowsy, conversation became monosyllabic, and we blinked lazily at the narrow ribbon of highroad far below, over which a motor with officers occasionally skimmed at tremendous speed. Herr Wohlrab told us that four officers had been shot in their car by a sentry not far away for refusing to slow down or answer the challenge, and he, thinking they were spies, had fired. Two real spies had also been caught in the locality.

We were on very good terms with the soldiers guarding the railway, especially with the Alsatian who seemed quite fond of us. Alsatian soldiers, though, were never stationed very long here, and were more often sent north on service, as the authorities always thought it possible they might have French sympathies, and so would not put them on continuous duty too near Alsace-Lorraine.

Troop-trains were ever coming up from Basel filled with officers and men, who used to cheer and wave their handkerchiefs in answer to ours. Where the carriage walls were not decorated with branches of greenery and wild flowers, they were scribbled over with chalked-up legends, such as "Nach Paris!" and

" Ein Brief von Paris
Kriegt mein Schatz gewiss !"

At the next station down the line they were provided with bread, coffee, and bunches of flowers, with roses for the officers, all of which were distributed by ladies and girls from the districts round about.

The days passed very swiftly and pleasantly under the circumstances, and all things considered we enjoyed ourselves thoroughly. Mornings were spent in the garden with books and needlework till the postman, another dear friend of ours, paid his call. He would come gaily flourishing a packet of newspapers—unfortunately, July numbers sent from home ten days ago, and very unedifying.

"Something for you to read, you poor ones," he would say benevolently, "and a letter for the gracious Fräulein!" joyfully handing Christine an epistle from father; after which he would regard us all with rueful pity in his

kind eyes. "Ach, the pity of it all!" he sighed sorrowfully; "how has it happened that we should be enemies? It should never have been!"

In the course of the day officers passed in their cars, and everybody rushed out to see them, for a German officer in war-time was twice as thrilling as one in the days of peace. Sometimes, too, droves of beautiful horses which had been commandeered went by on their way to some headquarters. The poor beasts were terribly worried by the big horse-flies and hornets that hovered round them in myriads, and while they and their owners were having refreshment at the inn, Ralph and David used to find a great fascination in helping the men to hit them off and kill them as they settled on the backs of the horses, who stood perfectly still when they felt the sundry whacks and slaps which brought them relief from their tormentors.

On Sunday afternoons the garden was filled to overflowing with country people coming in for coffee and beer, and we made ourselves scarce as a rule till most of them had gone, though there was a Wiesbaden lady who came in later with her daughter and a black "police dog," who used to jump up and greet me by throwing his forelegs about my waist with

every demonstration of affection, and partly in this way we made friends with his owners and had many a gossip with them.

After the first week we were practically free to go anywhere in the district we liked, for the hot-heads of the village had all gone, though the guttural roars of discussion and table-thumping to be heard in the evenings in the bar-parlour partitioned off from the dining-room where we sat at supper were not calculated to reassure, nor spoke of lamb-like natures! One village worthy, however, whom we nicknamed "Old Boozey," had such an infectious and gigantic guffaw that we used to shriek with laughter whenever he did, although we had no idea what the joke might be; the voices were loud enough for us to hear what was said, but the dialect quite impossible to understand, and till we got used to the din, this gave us, quaking with apprehension next door, an added uneasiness of mind.

Sometimes a shrimp of a boy belonging to a travelling circus visited the bar-parlour, and sang or recited patriotic folk-songs and anecdotes to the assembled company. He might have been about seven years old, and had a cherubic little face; but the enormous stentorian voice issuing from his tiny, meagre frame might

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have belonged to a sturdy, beefy youth of at least twelve.

Apart from the nightly animated debates, and a rifle practice with live cartridges which took place one morning when we were requested to stay in the garden, there was very little in the smiling valley suggestive of war, although Mülhausen was being stormed not many miles away. If we had had the energy to climb to the top of one of the mountains, we could have heard the cannon-thunder quite distinctly, but in the valley the sound scarcely reached us. At first, whenever the church bell rang at twelve and seven o'clock, we used to think they must be celebrating a victory ; but no, it only pealed for the more peaceful purpose of summoning the workers on the hillsides to the midday meal and evening rest.

After about ten days had passed, we began to think that we had better join the parents if they could not meet us here, for if the English people were soon to be allowed to go home, we did not wish to be left behind in this out-of-the-way place. Accordingly, we asked at the station how trains were running, and were told we might possibly reach Nauheim all right. Good! we would attempt it. Fräulein Schmidt was returning to Heidelberg, so we decided we

would all travel together as far as we could, and we telegraphed to Nauheim to this effect ; then we packed—I too, for I had recovered one, though not both, of my boxes.

We felt tired and sleepy eating our last supper, and would gladly have gone to bed instead of to the train which was to leave at the uncomfortable hour of 10 p.m. However, an hour before we should have started, the station people sent up to say that it was quite out of question to get as far as Nauheim, there were as yet no connections, and they would therefore advise us not to go. Fräulein Schmidt nearly wept when she heard that after all she must travel alone, and said farewell very sadly.

Six days later we made another and more successful attempt to travel. The parents had asked us to come to them as soon as possible, for they and the other English hoped to be leaving for home almost at once. To our unspeakable relief, with the letter came some money and a cheque, which Herr Wohlrab at last agreed to accept. Now we were able to look our host in the face again, and felt to a certain extent free of care.

Once more we set out for the ten o'clock train, taking with us fifteen buttered rolls to support us on our way, and a new inclusive

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passport, leaving beautiful little Gutach, Herr Wohlrab, the comely barmaid, the Frau Professor, and last, but not least, the dear good Hans, with grateful and regretful hearts.

III

THIRTY HOURS BY RAIL

THE little train steamed into Gutach at about 10.30, and they told us it would take us as far as Offenburg, which was the first place of any size on the line, but at no great distance.

We had been cautioned beforehand not to speak English, and we therefore bade Ralph and David, if they could not understand what we might say to them when other people were present, to at least look intelligent and pretend they did; for the rest, they must keep their mouths shut, cling to their especial pieces of hand-luggage, and on no account lose sight of us.

Herr Wohlrab found seats for us in a dimly-lighted third-class compartment full of wreathing tobacco-smoke. Our travelling companions consisted of a shabby, sleepy old man who sat behind us, a young couple alternately whispering sweet nothings and dozing upon one another's chests, an odd civilian or two,

and a soldier who was coquetting with two girls, one of whom could not enjoy it as she was suffering from severe toothache. Once a little peasant man, whose spirits had been fired by undue liquid refreshment, bobbed up from somewhere and tried to execute a tango at the door of the car, attempting to sing snatches of song ; but as nobody gave him any encouragement, he made no further effort to entertain, and vanished whence he had come. The journey to Offenburg should not have taken more than an hour, but it was 1.20 a.m. before we finally arrived there. On the platform everybody gathered round a porter official to hear what time their trains left ; ours, we were informed, did not go till 6.30, which meant a wait of five hours.

At the barrier we had to show our passport, and then we repaired to a platform the other side of the station, where waiting-rooms and benches were to be seen, but we found every available seat already occupied. This was disappointing ; but, putting the two handbags up against the wall, we agreed to sit upon them in turns, meanwhile keeping a watchful eye open for anybody who might leave his place. To our great joy, within ten minutes not only one, but four people—mamma, papa, and two children—left a neighbouring bench to catch a

train, and as one man we flew at it, taking possession with smiles of gratified satisfaction. Now, however slowly the hours might pass, it would not be so bad. David was soon asleep with his head resting on Christine's shoulder, till it gradually slid down to her lap; but the rest of us stayed awake.

All around there was plenty to interest us, from the two sentries tramping up and down the platform, to a certain fine, patriarchal-looking individual stalking to and fro, upright of figure and broad of chest, calculated to show to advantage the solemn Iron Cross and other more gaudy medals displayed thereon.

"Wouldn't Fräulein like to play a tune?" asked a voice, and there in front of us stood the two sentries, one of them eyeing the violin-case I was hugging. I smiled amiably and shook my head, remarking that neither he nor I would have much pleasure therein. He replied that he was glad all the same to recognize a fellow-musician, as he himself performed on the violin and used to play all kinds of music with a band on Sunday afternoons. From that we got upon other topics—as to when they expected to go to the Front, and how long they had been stationed in Offenburg. They told us that the patriarch we had noticed was a Count who had fought in thirteen

battles in the Franco-Prussian War, and, though now nearly seventy years of age, was about to volunteer his services again.

"One holds oneself upright before such a man!" said No. 1 Sentry enthusiastically.

His comrade's eye meanwhile had been caught by the red carnations lying in Wini-fred's lap, which the Frau Professor had given us as we left Gutach—a favourite custom with the Germans when they are speeding the parting guest or friend.

"What lovely flowers Fräulein has! I wish I had one," he ventured, and was immediately presented with one of the coveted blossoms.

"Well, now, you couldn't leave *me* out of it," pleaded No. 1.

But when he had likewise received a carnation, both warriors had to bicker over them.

"I've got the reddest one, anyhow, old dear," crowed No. 2 at last, "and I shall wear it next my heart on the battle-field!"

After a few more remarks on the chilliness of the morning hour, and inquiries as to the time of our train, the two moved away, greatly to my relief, for I was afraid our speech would have betrayed us, or that they would address Ralph; but evidently his sleepy expression did

not invite conversation, and I suppose they took us to be creatures from another province talking a dialect.

At four o'clock we noted a small boy with a bicycle carrying a paper bag, and waiting before the locked doors of a hall to our right; we did not need to be told what that bag contained—faintly but surely the aroma of hot new rolls was wafted to our nostrils and woke even David. Immediately every sense was on the alert, and with fascinated attention we all watched what the locked doors would do. Presently a light shot into being behind the opaque glass, the lock was turned, and the boy entered, followed a few seconds later by one or two individuals who made their way in with the air of having the right to do so. No word of either English or German was exchanged between us, for with one accord we snatched up our belongings, marched boldly into the large room, and were shortly rewarded with cups of coffee and warm rolls. How good they tasted! And better still was the feeling that the night was over.

I still had my ticket to Frankfurt to buy—the others already had their Cook's return coupons—so I asked a passing official where the ticket-office was, and he offered to fetch my ticket for me, which he did, afterwards

shepherding us all to the right platform for our train.

The appointed time for departure was, as we had been told, 6.30, but it was quite eight o'clock before the train put in any appearance. However, time did not hang heavily, for there were troop-trains continually passing through or stopping at the station, some of them going to the Front, and others bringing back warriors (not wounded ones) who had been there. Girls rushed from one cattle-waggon to another with buckets of coffee and baskets filled with enormous hunks of bread, and fed the soldier occupants whenever a train stopped, while the civilian passengers on the platform exchanged cigars for trophies and souvenirs, and drank in all the news. The troops had come from Mülhausen, and the men said that the slaughter there had been terrible, the dead piled upon each other three feet high; they themselves looked sunburnt and dirty, but on the whole very healthy, and some were as jolly as if they had been returning from a hunting-party. After the trains moved out, men went along the rails collecting the scraps of paper and rubbish dropped from the carriages; we saw one of them pick up an old cartridge, for which we longed to ask him, as he tucked it away in his

basket and seemed to set no value on it himself.

Just as we were beginning to fear we might not leave Offenburg at all that morning, our train at length came in. It was fairly crowded, but we found places in a compartment with two young people, who we thought at first were a married couple, though we discovered later they were brother and sister, also travelling to Frankfurt. We made a mental resolve not to let them out of our sight.

Before starting, a young soldier with a nasty-looking revolver stuck in his belt boarded the train and demanded to see passports.

"Chreestina My Leetlefayer?" he read out from the sheet we presented and gazed round inquiringly. I indicated Christine.

"Byartrees Maria L——?" he continued.

"That's myself," I answered modestly.

"Weenifred Katrrrina L——?" Here I introduced Winifred; but it was not until he began to blush and flounder in the lingual complications of "Ralph Ethelbert" (names unknown in Germany), and saw the awful string following "David," that it dawned upon him that we were all one family, and he might have spared himself the effort of calling us out separately.

At last the train slid out, but not, alas! to

proceed very far, for in a few minutes we came to a standstill and waited an interminable time, apparently for nothing. Eventually, though, we started once more, and stopped again shortly afterwards at a small station where there was a troop-train waiting. The passengers in ours were delighted and thronged into the corridor, throwing all imaginable dainties to the soldiers opposite, who seemed very grateful for them. We had nothing to throw, for our supplies were too short, and we fed ourselves instead with one roll apiece to stay the pangs which were now beginning to make themselves felt inside.

After this pause at Appenweihe we really did get on, and soon had left the Black Forest country behind us. At Baden-Baden there was great excitement, for twelve French prisoners were unloaded from a compartment at the back of the train. They were dressed in their red and blue uniforms, and looked shabby and sorry, though not half as dilapidated as we had been led to expect by the Gutach folk, who told us that the French were very badly equipped, so poorly shod; prisoners arriving in Germany had their clothes only hanging together by safety-pins, and many of them wore odd boots and house-slippers, while most of them had not had food for two to three

days, and were nearly out of their minds from hunger, heat, and the fear of being shot by their captors. As soon as they reached German soil they were fed at the railway stations the same as German soldiers.

Somewhere near one o'clock we arrived at Karlsruhe, where we all had to change. Whilst we were waiting in our next train—whither we had followed the Frankfurt brother and sister—a packed troop-train came in on the opposite side. They were a very merry crew, and hopped nimbly from the platform to the rails to catch the hail of cigars, cigarettes, and chocolate, etc., hurled at them from our train. "Yes," sighed a fellow-passenger, "how many of those poor fellows will be able to hop and jump like that much longer?"

Feeding soldiers reminded us once again of our own hunger, and we ate one more roll each, reserving the last round for supper.

In a few minutes we were speeding farther on our way to Frankfurt. Ralph and David fell fast asleep, and the rest of us reached that awful state of fatigue when one cannot actually sleep, but feels one's neck too long and one's head overweighted. Soon each found himself inclining to and even lolling affectionately upon his neighbour's shoulder—and that a stranger's. David had a particularly embarrassing way,

too, whenever he roused, of stretching and sending out his doubled fists in all directions, regardless of the neighbouring chest or nose ; but fortunately these gymnastics and our apologies were always accepted with indulgent smiles.

The grey and chilly drizzle that had characterized the morning now gave place to heat and sunshine, till the compartment became almost uncomfortably warm, and on nearing Mannheim, where we had to change again, the unfortunate boys were so heavy with sleep that they had to be propped up, with their heads out of the open window, to let the cool, rushing air blow upon their faces before they could keep awake for more than two minutes together. They looked miserably white and famished, and I felt we must by hook or by crook get some substantial refreshment for them in Mannheim.

When we left the train we followed on the heels of the Frankfurt brother and sister as usual, but suddenly the sister became angry and excited about some luggage, which it appeared her brother had failed to have forwarded, and which now, of course, did not turn up ; so they retired to the telegraph office, the brother looking rather cowed and glum, and we went on to find our train and platform.

There was a train each side of the platform, but we were given to understand that the left-hand one was going to Frankfurt, and took our seats in it accordingly. We had an hour and a half to wait before it left, and as I had spied a refreshment-room the other side of the station, I said I would take the passport with me in order to get through the barriers without trouble or hindrance, and buy some food of all kinds, also drink, if possible, and would bring it back to them there if they would stay and keep the seats and luggage.

I sallied forth, and a boy scout showed the way into the refreshment-room where I bought some beautiful rolls, with enormous juicy slices of ham, and five huge sections of cake with nice damp icing. Drink I could not carry back after all, so gulped down a cup of coffee, thinking the others might come here too while I in my turn mounted guard over their seats and belongings, there being ample time. I hurried back, but at the barrier in the station-hall the official stopped me and said that nobody was to be allowed through till half an hour before the train started. He was diligent in duty, and all pleading was in vain, so I had to spend a long half-hour chafing and waiting till it should please him to let everybody pass. The remaining half-hour would certainly leave

plenty of time, but the others would have to hurry over their drinks.

At last the time was up. I passed unmolested with the other passengers through the barrier, and flew back to the platform rejoicing; but—the line was empty, the train was gone! I searched up and down the platform distractedly, and sought brothers and sisters in the carriages of the train the other side of the platform which a porter now informed me was the one bound for Frankfurt; but they were not there. Just then somebody behind me said “Fräulein?” and turning round, I found the Frankfurt brother at my elbow. He had not seen the others, he said, when I asked him, but he went and questioned a guard as to where the train had gone. It seemed its destination was Friedrichsfelde, where they, as well as ourselves, would eventually have to change again, so that I could not fail to meet them when our train arrived there. I felt relieved, but not yet quite happy.

In the meantime the once more peaceful pair plied me with small talk and inquiries.

“Are you all by yourselves?” they asked, “or are you meeting relations somewhere?”

“Yes,” I replied; “we’re going to our parents in Nauheim.”

“And then are you soon returning home together?”

"I expect we shall."

"It is a long way to America, isn't it?"

"Yes," I agreed, beginning to feel a little uneasy.

"And shall you go via England?"

"Yes," I said, wondering now if the anticipated moment had come.

It had.

"You *are* Americans, aren't you?" challenged the sister.

"Oh no," I replied, outwardly calm, but inwardly very uncomfortable; "we're English!" And then I went on to tell them of our adventures to fill up any awkward pause following on the shock of disillusion.

However, our unpopular nationality did not appear to make a very unfavourable impression, and we chatted amicably till we reached Friedrichsfelde. Waiting on the opposite platform I saw a familiar group, and waved my food-bags at them by way of joyful greeting and encouragement; but in any case the meeting was one of mutual gladness.

Eventually we found ourselves in Frankfurt at 1.30 a.m., having travelled from Friedrichsfelde with the brother and sister again, who now chaffed us about English affairs. The brother had been in England, it appeared; in fact, he was in London the night war was

declared. The other people in the compartment were of no particular consequence except one—a plump little man with tiny feet, whose views and ideas on English politics made us sick, and who would expound them at large to the assembled company, explaining to them that France had been forced on to the battle-field by England, and was England's cat's-paw.

In Frankfurt the boys were provided with their badly-needed drinks at one of the station waiting-rooms, which was full of sleepy people sitting about on luggage and sprawling inert over tables—anything that would support their weary bodies while they ate and slept.

We had not long to wait for our next train, which left at 2.15, and arrived at Nauheim at 3.15. Once more the boys had to have their heads thrust out of the window before we could get them fully awake, though, when the welcome name-board in the station came into sight, nothing was needed to restore alertness or energy to any one of us. Here we were at last, we thought. Now for food! now for bed!

But a rude shock was in store for us. We left the train happily enough, without forgetting even one handbag, and were just making for the stairway to the street when a police official barred our joyful progress, forbidding

us to enter the town. No more foreigners were to be allowed to come in, he said, and we must get back into the train quickly as it would not wait.

Expostulation and protest were in vain, he even seemed to resent our entering Nauheim so far as to be planting our feet upon its station platform. We asked him despairingly where, since we might not join our parents, we were supposed to go, and where, above all, the train itself was going? No enlightening information was to be had on either point. He only hustled us into a carriage just as the train was about to move out, and vexing sore, we were carried onward, we knew not where.

The train stopped again in about ten minutes, and rather diffidently this time we deposited ourselves and our baggage on the pavement that did service as platform. It was a tiny hamlet consisting of three or four cottages, but no telephone or telegraph office. Here the station-master did not object to having us, and even offered us the shelter of the waiting-room, as there would be no other train running till one in the morning which left at half-past five, and went in the Nauheim direction to Friedberg, the neighbouring town on the line. We decided to go there, for it was certain at least to have telephonic and telegraphic communica-

tion with Nauheim, and then, as we passed through that town again, we would make a final appeal to the adamantine police officer by showing him our passport, which, owing to pressure of time and circumstance, we had been unable to produce at our first meeting.

We waited, and the dawn came, lighting up the cold blue sky with soft rosy colour. David, to my great wonder and admiration, was still able to appreciate and praise the beauty of it. Just as I was really falling asleep for the first time since leaving Gutach, the boys came to say that the train was coming in, and in ten minutes we were once more approaching Nauheim, where we saw the official standing at the stairway guarding it as before. Winifred took the passport while we gathered together our other effects, and rushing up to him called his urgent attention to it.

"*Why* did you not show me that before?" demanded the uniformed potentate; "of course you may come in now!"

"My good man, you never gave us a chance of showing the pass the first time!" she protested, and waved her arms to us, craning our necks out of the carriage window to watch proceedings, but ready—aye, ready to make a speedy exit at her sign. Even then it seemed as if Fate was against our ending our travels,

for now Ralph caught the case of umbrellas and fishing-rods across the doorway, very effectually barring our escape. With combined and frenzied efforts, however, we managed first to dislodge the case, and then quickly to eject the unfortunate youth, ourselves tumbling out after him with equal haste. It was not very far to walk to the hotel, and before long we were standing with buoyant spirits outside the door, which was opened to us by the proprietor himself in night attire, who, when he had recognized his early and travel-stained guests, bade us welcome. The parents were visited without much delay, and our beds with even less. Hungry though we were, bed made a stronger appeal than food, and we were all very soon wrapped in profound and peaceful slumber, trial and hunger forgotten.

IV

WITH AN ENGLISH COLONY

THE English Colony in Nauheim consisted of some hundred poor souls, the majority of whom were ill or had been, among them many heart patients. Nearly all were feverishly anxious to get home, but the consummation so devoutly wished for was not to happen for many a long day. It was promised by the Authorities that the captives should be allowed to return at the end of the week, or the early part of the next. Buoyed up with hope, they packed and waited, only to be told when Monday or Tuesday had passed that unfortunately the officials had not been able to manage it, but arrangements would be made for the visitors to leave within a few days, perhaps—thus, *da capo*, till September was on the wane, sometimes varied by the announcement that it would be fully a fortnight before we were released, or even that we should be kept till the end of the war. In the end we resigned

ourselves to an attitude of wait-and-see, and sometimes planned how we would spend the winter there; each thought out some occupation he would choose in case of having to earn a livelihood, or what part he would take in entertaining the rest of the community. We proposed holding intellectual lectures, numerous readings, or even kindergarten demonstrations, not to mention concerts, vocal and instrumental.

At the outbreak of war all the visitors had hastened to procure themselves passports, but the police soon confiscated these, leaving numbered slips of paper in their stead, to be kept until the Berlin authorities had examined the particulars stated in the passports and saw fit to return them to their several owners; thus they had us all entirely in their power, for without passports it was quite impossible to move.

Some of the visitors then in Nauheim had come from Wiesbaden, whence they had been sent out at an hour's notice, and as there was no railway service, they had had to drive all the way in whatever droschkys they could get hold of, and pay their Jehus fabulous prices for the trouble. At Friedberg they had had their luggage examined, boxes and handbags emptied and returned in great disorder, so that one lady

when she received her box again found that she had come into possession of a suit of pyjamas, some shirts and a razor.

Our arrival in Nauheim came as a slight diversion in the gloom of constant apprehension and disappointment of the detained English already there, and we found ourselves welcomed and made much of by one and all, for everybody seemed to have heard of us and our travels. To celebrate the joyful event of a family once more united, the seven of us went to one of the town cafés to have tea, which was the last we had for some weeks, for we were all too poor to afford it; and if we needed anything in the afternoon we had to fall back upon the rolls secreted from the breakfast-table, or one or two buns bought in the town. Everybody was more or less poverty-stricken, while some were verging on actual want owing to the fact that no English gold nor cheques of any kind were being accepted at the banks. Some of the more unfortunate Russians had absolutely nothing and were practically starving, till the English started a Relief Fund, which allowed the poorest fivepence a day. In the early days of August a committee of six or seven of the Englishmen had been voted to look after and promote various funds. A common Treasury was first instituted, to which the

more affluent visitors subscribed, laying their money at the disposal of the Treasurer to be distributed among the indigent. There was also a Waiter-Tip Fund supported by the guests in our hotel, who gave a certain sum each week towards it, which amount was then carefully divided and pressed into the grateful palms of the two maids and one waiter respectively on a Saturday evening.

The first few days of our stay in Nauheim were spent largely in going the round of the hotels and pensions where English people were staying and collecting the number of names to tally with those entered on the passports with the bearer's home address, age, and status as required by the Berlin officials before permitting us to depart. It was also our mission while on the same errand to inquire after the financial welfare of every one, and take down the names of the destitute who would need help from the Relief Fund. One or two of the ladies in our hotel, with Winifred and I had our special beats to cover, but on one occasion when we were going around for the purpose of advising every man to have his ill-health certificate more fully filled in and signed by his doctor, two of the gentlemen in my district were unfortunately "not at home"; they were spending the morning at the police station after

having been overheard commenting on the German Army in uncomplimentary terms. Frankfurt was usually the enforced Mecca of the offending Nauheim visitor. One patient, quite obviously weak and ill, was carried off to that town on the supposition that he was a spy; the fact of his being a retired naval officer had aroused their suspicions, and they suddenly decided that such a dangerous person ought not to be at large. Thanks to the intervention of the American Vice-Consul, he was allowed to return after one or two days' detention, and none too gentle or courteous treatment on the part of his gaolers—paying his own railway fares. There was another young Englishman, a heart-patient, who also caused some anxiety among his compatriots. He had for a short time served in the English Army before he became ill, but had—rather unwisely in this case—omitted to say so, for it came nevertheless to the ears of the authorities, with the result that he disappeared from our midst altogether for two or three weeks and could not be traced, till he, too, was finally unearthed in Frankfurt by the Vice-Consul and sent back to Nauheim.

With the exception of these contretemps there was very little to disturb the gentle monotony of the daily round. In the mornings we usually

prowled the streets of the little town with heads high, no whit abashed by the sundry scowls flashed at us from the darkling brows of the other pedestrians. There was one old man in particular sporting an Iron Cross, won in 1870, with great ostentation, who attracted our attention, and who made it specially clear by the fleeting changes of his facial expression how little he could thole us. One morning when my father respectfully saluted his medal, his nose could almost be seen to curl in his outraged feelings of disgust. It was a good thing he could not hear father in the afternoons singing the German National Anthem lustily to the English words of "God save our gracious King," when the band burst forth with the familiar air, and the public joined in with their voices.

A market was held every morning in the old quarter of the town, and we often used to go and buy a modicum of fruit for the afternoon repast, invariably taking David with us, for the market women loved him, and would sometimes give him a couple of juicy pears or plums gratis to put in his pocket, so we were confident in his company of receiving an extra heavy pound of fruit for our few pfennigs. Once he went forth alone to buy a present for one of the ladies of his affection and regard

staying in the hotel. His knowledge of German did not extend much beyond "Danke" and "Donnerwetter," but it was characteristic of him that he returned home with an exquisite little brooch, having secured it for less than its original price—for where his tongue fails him, his charm wins. He certainly did look rather fascinating in his old, nearly worn-out flannels, and he knew it too, for when Winifred decreed he should wear them no more, now that the trousers had a rent in them, he went straight-way and mended them himself rather than have to discard the attractive garments. His personal appearance in August was really not as faultless as it might have been, poor lad, for both boys' hair had grown to great and untidy lengths without our being able to afford a visit to the hairdresser, and we had perforce to shear their heads ourselves with needlework scissors. I instituted myself as the Delila, but was not a very skilful one, for, when finished, their heads scarcely looked professionally done, and David inadvertently made himself look a worse sight than ever when he watered his remaining hair in the effort to tone down the ravages wrought in his beauty. In the end my father produced a mark, and they were taken into the town to one of the hairdressers, who gave their heads a more artistic finish.

The shops in the fashionable and modern part of the town were most fascinating; the stationers' were the most attractive of any, and one was always sure to meet a cluster of friends gazing in at the windows and enjoying, to the amazement of the Germans, their humorous postcards and comic papers profusely illustrated with caricatures of the English and their Allies. The sense of humour displayed therein was unfortunately more often than not remarkable for its unnecessary vulgarity and coarseness, and for obscenity it was almost unrivalled. At another shop there was an enormous map of Europe hung up, studded with tiny flags which marked the progress of the German Army in all directions; curiously enough, though, the movements of the little flags did not always coincide with the newspapers' reports of operations in the way of advances and victories, yet in those early days even the flags moved down towards Paris with alarming rapidity. But in the darkest times of adversity, when continual defeat was reported, the British appeared ever light-hearted and undaunted, and at the plenteously provided lunch or dinner table there was never any obvious lack of cheerful and incessant chatter, though many a heart was doubting and troubled.

After lunch the afternoons were devoted to a peaceful forty winks by most, or by others to a little washing; one gentleman, indeed, was a better hand at it than many a woman, and washed miscellaneous garments with as much success as his handkerchiefs.

In the evenings bridge was played with unabated zest, and occasionally a few of us amused ourselves with "consequences," which we found a very cheerful game. Once, coming on a professional visit, the doctor surprised us at a kindergarten demonstration led by Winifred for the benefit and entertainment of the company at large in the hall lounge—to the great edification of the maids, Lisa and Gretchen, who crouched in the dark on the stairs, where they could watch undisturbed the child-like antics of those extraordinary and light-hearted British. Had they not just suffered a defeat, these English? Yet here they were frolicking and singing little German nursery songs with as much gusto as if it were a jubilate in their own tongue.

✦ This was probably during the Mons retreat, and they were, indeed, trying days for us, although we bore them with apparently unbroken spirits, which the Germans found inexplicable. At the "Israelitish Home," a pension which had been converted into a temporary

hospital for the wounded, the soldiers used to jeer at us when we passed them, hoping to cover us with the confusion we ought to have felt in accordance with prevailing circumstances; but one lady returning that way to her pension unexpectedly deprived them of the pleasure, for as she passed the "Home" she adopted a joyful and triumphant gait, tripped gaily by, even trilling a little song, and with every appearance of delight waved a newspaper to her friends who had all rushed down to the gate at the sight of her, fondly imagining from her conduct—and very naturally, poor things!—that there was cause for British rejoicing. After Mons there were no more services held in the English church, for on the following Sunday some hooligans printed a notice which said: "If you dare ring your bell, we shall blow up your church as we have done your army." They then deputed some small boys to nail it up by the church door, while they themselves sat on the seat outside the gate to witness the chagrin and discomfiture of the church-going English as they entered. The sound of the bell did not offend the ears of the Nauheimers that morning, but the undaunted sons and daughters of Britain walked in sedately to Morning Prayer without so much as deigning a glance at the

displeasing poster. During the week, however, the authorities deemed it better to close the church altogether. In Hamburg we heard they were using the English church as a hospital.

Those who wished to attend a place of worship then had to go to the German Protestant Church. It was at any rate interesting to hear what the pastor had to say; the Lutheran service was simple and impressive, and the organ was beautifully played. One Sunday after Nauheim had lost many of her inhabitants on the battle-field, the organist gave a wonderfully tender and sympathetic rendering of "O rest in the Lord." The morning service itself began with a holy song, usually Martin Luther's grand old hymn, "Ein' feste Burg ist uns'rer Gott," which friend and foe alike could sing with equal fervour and comfort to his soul—though, indeed, the Pastor intimated in his sermons that we had no God, the Germans appeared to have the full monopoly of Him, till one began to feel a very pariah in the church. I never heard the good man say anything blasphemous in connection with the Kaiser, though. In most things he was clear-sighted and broad-minded, and he did not hesitate to tell his congregation that the war was intended to be

a visitation on their sins and shortcomings, and that if their country were defeated, they must regard that calamity not so much as a proof of their enemies' right and might, but as Divine chastisement. He also foresaw, he said, that there would be fewer pieces of good bread thrown about in the streets this winter, cast there by wasteful school-children.

He had a godly, fatherly face, and a sonorous voice, and his more "neutral" sermons were very fine. "Only have faith, and we *must* conquer," he preached. Another sermon had for its text: "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon." But this was a really nettling discourse, for he went on to say that the English served Mammon, and the Germans must look to it that they did not follow suit, as of late they had shown a dangerous tendency to do. Sir Edward Grey had said that it was the last million thrown upon the field that counted and decided the victory. This was the essence of Mammonism, and probably nothing so mercenary had ever been said before in history. In a fourth sermon the congregation was exhorted not to think of all the temporal gain that would be theirs by victory, but of the good they would be able to enforce in the enemy's country. When Heaven had ordained them to be conquerors, it had meant them to

be instrumental in bringing true Christianity right to the heart of the foe, introducing sober ways, and, stripping the defeated of their poor hypocrisy, would make them a God-fearing people.

Towards the end of August the wounded began to arrive in Nauheim, though their coming was rumoured many times before their actual arrival. However, at last one afternoon at about five o'clock we were told that a Red Cross train had just come in, and some of us hurried down to the street-corner where the women and children were waiting expectantly, the former weeping tears of compassion as they saw the poor wan and weary men being wheeled away in invalid-chairs. The worst cases were taken along in these or on swinging stretchers, but the less serious ones were bundled into motor-cars and cabs, and looked fairly cheerful, waving and cheering up the tearful women. Even those on the stretchers tried to smile and crack a joke occasionally. "Hey, you needn't cry over us, mother," chuckled one fellow feebly; "we're not dead yet!" Some of the people had brought roses with them and laid them on the stretchers as they passed, which attention was much appreciated. One saw the men twisting the flowers in their fingers and putting them to their

nostrils with a dreamy, happy little smile on their white, drawn faces. The children, of course, yelled hurrahs as each victim came along, which was a well-meant tribute of honour, but must have caused the poor things more pain than pride. The look in the men's eyes was awful to behold—a strained expression of lingering horror, as if they had seen hell; and in spite of the comparative cleanliness of every man, and the fresh dressings, the atmosphere of the battle-field seemed still to cling to them—a lurking breath of gunpowder and bloodshed. Their wounds, since they had left the Front, had been redressed when necessary by Red Cross sisters, who always attended at the big stations as the troop-trains stopped on their way through. The majority of the men were apparently anxious to return to the Front, for a sister told me that an oft-repeated question was: "Sister, when shall I be able to go and fight again? Do say I shall be better soon!"

About a hundred and fifty wounded may have arrived the first day, possibly more, but further batches were always coming in, and we used to see the Fire Brigade men walking down to the station to help in getting the men out of the train and to act in the capacity of stretcher-bearers. Six hundred shirts had been

provided by the Red Cross working-party and sent to the hospitals. One of the bath-houses had been turned into a large sewing-hall, and thither we used to wend our way to help with the shirts in company with the other American and German "Sister Susies," from ten o'clock till half-past twelve in the mornings, or from three till seven o'clock in the afternoons. Once we even took David with us, he being a good needleman, and afterwards, when knitting came into vogue, he and Ralph used to knit square wash-rags, which kept them out of mischief and excellently occupied, while the ladies and we turned our attentions to mittens and socks. We found these very useful to take about with us as passports, for the people were always amiable and obliging at the sight of grey wool.

Knitting was as much the craze in Germany as in England; quite tiny children were to be seen busy with wash-rags or even grey socks, sitting beside nurses, sisters, or mammas, all likewise industrious, listening to the band in the afternoons, and often joining in when it played "Austria" or "Die Wacht am Rhein"—stirring compositions, thrilling even the stranger-breast, but we got such surfeit of them that our delight very quickly sickened. Very often convalescent officers limped round

the gardens on the arms of their ladies, and the soldiers, too, generally collected round the bandstand till they were recalled to their respective hospitals at about half-past six—one could hear the call-bells ringing from the adjacent buildings.

A great many of the hospices and pensions had been converted into "lazarettes," or military hospitals. Our hotel commanded a view of two—one, an ordinary pension facing us in a side street, and the other a sort of charitable and religious nursing institute at the back, where we heard the sisters singing a chorale every morning at seven o'clock, what hour the band at the drinking-wells also started to accompany the matutinal draught. The institute had a fairly large garden, where the wounded, dressed in long galatea lounge-coats, used to recline in the sun, gazed upon with eager interest by a crowd the other side of the railings, who alternately fed them with chocolate and plied them with questions, hanging with bated breath upon their tales of battle. They were a very nice lot of soldiers there—gentle, simple and harmless-looking men, not in the least ferocious—but our favourites were housed in the pension. At about ten o'clock in the mornings these all flocked to the windows and on to the balconies, divested of their

bandages and dressings, and let their open wounds bake in the sun which obligingly shone daily; this was some new method of treating wounds. As can be imagined, it was not always a very savoury sight—one poor man, who was specially conspicuous, had half his nose shot away. Ralph and David soon found their particular chums among the patients, who used to send the two boys on errands into the town, giving them money to buy fruit—which was sold cheaper if bought for the wounded—chocolates, and cigarettes; these last David very often bought out of his own modest funds, for he could not resist the bargain of ten for a penny, apart from the pleasure he took in distributing them among the men and exchanging small-talk with them, though how he managed that is beyond me, seeing that his German was so limited; but he actually persuaded one of the nursing sisters into showing him round a ward on the ground-floor one afternoon. Winifred and I never intruded there, though we should have been only too pleased to have had the chance; but we sometimes invaded the bit of garden before the front-door where the wounded were all sitting about, and presented them with the delectable pfennig cigarettes or gossiped with them—when the matron was not near, for she

was somewhat of a tyrant in her own domain, and it behoved patients and visitors alike to have an awed respect in her presence. If we stayed long enough, the soldiers would tell us how and where they had received their wounds.

"My comrade here was wounded in the head—just a surface wound, you understand!" remarked one man to me.

"Ach so?" said I, regarding with becoming interest the complacently smoking brother-in-arms. "He has been very quick getting better, though. Will you all have to go and fight again when you are well?"

"No; some will be sent home."

"Good!" I said. "How nice for them—or would they rather return to the Front?" This mindful of the extreme patriotism and bravery of the German troops.

But the invalid smiled indulgently. "Those who go back, of course go willingly," he said, "though they do not set out this time with the same delight and enthusiasm as they did the first, for they feel a little timid and nervous now. They know what they have to face. And our comrades who will not be coming with us again—they are very glad to be sent home to mother."

The wounded were all Germans with the

exception of two or three French prisoners. One of the last died, but he was accorded the same honours of a military funeral as a German soldier.

Discipline in the German Army during war-time regarding drink was very strict. No soldier was allowed alcoholic drink of any kind—not even the light beer—for we heard that a publican in Friedberg who had offered a private a glass of beer had been imprisoned for breaking that law.

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September 2nd was the anniversary of Sedan. The day passed more or less uneventfully for us, but we were warned not to make ourselves too conspicuous in the town. In the afternoon processions of children carrying flags and shouting patriotic songs paraded the streets, and the Burgomeister made a long speech by the bandstand, which was received with ecstatic applause by the populace. Towards evening the fun and noise grew louder, but there was nothing particularly rowdy about it. We, at any rate, all retired to bed at ten o'clock, and most of us were soon wrapped in slumber. Scarcely, however, had 12.30 struck when the Protestant church bells began to peal spasmodically, and with a sort of drunken irregularity as they increased in *tempo*.

"Seems to be plenty of beer going to-night," murmured Winifred sleepily.

I heard other sounds in the town—a faint echo of a single voice, followed by cheers and a roar from many throats—so I slipped on to our balcony to try and catch more of what was going on. Now the Roman Catholic church bells were jangling and clashing against the Protestant peal, rending the air with harsh and hideous discord, intermingled with the hoots and howls from the town. Next we heard the beat and thunder of drums, and then the band struck up with "Die Wacht am Rhein," "Deutschland, Deutschland über Alles," and the National Anthem, repeating them again and again in wild succession. This was more than beer could be responsible for; this bewildering, chaotic pandemonium, shattering the night silence, held something sinister and awful. Winifred had now joined me on the balcony, and we shivered in unison in the ice-cold air while straining our ears to hear more; but there was nothing intelligible in the yells of the distant mob. One by one the lights were switched on in the Institute opposite, and then we heard sibilant whispers from the patch of hotel garden directly below us.

"French army annihilated!" said somebody.
"Paris! Paris!" crowed another; and yet a

third: "The whole of the British Fleet sunk!"

Ralph and David still slept, Christine too; so, leaving them in peace, we put on long coats and went downstairs to see who else might be at large and could tell us what had happened. On the next landing we found a motley crew in overcoats, mantles, and dressing-gowns, all as much in the dark as we were as to the cause of the sudden uproar. Despite the might and power of the German Army, we did not believe that they could have accomplished all that we had just heard rumoured at one fell swoop. Besides, we bore in mind that beer and spirits are apt to fire the imagination. Nevertheless, something unpleasant must be in store for the Allies. Perhaps the Germans really had reached Paris!

Now the roar was drawing closer; the mob was parading round the town and nearing us on the outskirts. Keeping our rooms in darkness, we watched intently from the windows till the procession came by. The lights in the streets were lowered, and there was no moon, but we could distinguish the dark, jibbering, jostling mass pushing forward with the band at its head as it passed the hotel, its progress illuminated only by a few little twinkling lanterns like will-o'-the-wisps, swinging and

jerking unsteadily at the ends of long poles borne by temperamental patriots. A pause was made by the hotel, and the band treated us to a repetition of the above-mentioned airs; but after some more bawling and hurrahs the procession moved on again.

We still did not understand what the hubbub was about, so, seeing that the lights were up in the proprietor's apartments, some three or four of us ventured down to inquire into matters. The proprietor himself had gone out to join the throng, but Mrs. Proprietor and the three children answered our diffident knock at the door.

"Oh! please, has anything happened? Can you tell us what is the matter?" we asked.

"We have conquered! we have conquered!" cried the little boy, his eyes shining like stars. "We have taken the Tsar prisoner and ten army corps!"

"Oh—er, thank you!" we murmured, and one by one crept back to bed. Poor old Tsar! but, thank goodness, not Paris!

About two o'clock the church bells began to sound tired, rang feebler, till at last they ceased altogether, and silence reigned once more.

The following morning the sun shone with his wonted vigour, but with particular humour

in his beams as they fell across the newspaper we were scanning through in vain to find mention of the unfortunate Tsar and his ten army corps; yet neither then nor after did the papers give any information of the incident. Two nights later, however, they attempted another orgy. Once again we rose from our beds to see what the disturbance might mean. On the ground-floor all was silence; but as we lingered with some of the others by the lift upstairs, we heard the bolts of the front-door being drawn. It was the proprietor, attended by William the waiter. "'Urra-a! 'Urrraaa!!" they barked vigorously to the night air. Then, having accomplished all that could reasonably be expected of good, but sleepy patriots, they locked up the front-door again and retired.

When the small procession (minus the band this time) reached the hospital pension it would have serenaded the inmates with "Die Wacht am Rhein," etc., but before they could proceed in their amiable intention, the matron appeared on one of the balconies and made a short and pithy speech to the effect that "Although it was very pleasing to witness such ardent patriotism, it would be better practice, and would show more regard for their invalid heroes, if they were to hold their peace and go quietly home; the noise was very

disturbing, and excited the patients." This was very true, for on Sedan Night a French soldier, hearing the din, and imagining in his delirium that he was again on the battle-field being pursued by the Germans, had jumped out of bed and rushed into the street, where he had consequently been shot down by the sentries.

This second, and fortunately last, nocturnal outing of the populace, was prompted by their enthusiasm at some congratulatory speeches of the Kaiser to his people which a citizen had been declaiming in the streets late in the night.

The German triumphs never went undemonstrated, flags were hoisted everywhere and the church bells rung; their joy over their victory at Metz was unbounded, and was celebrated in champagne, and they were equally delighted at our retreat from Mons, when they thought they had broken the backbone of the British Army. True, they found their exaltation over the reported capture of Belfort a little premature.

Later on, though, we heard that an order had newly come from Berlin saying that the Nauheimers must show a more becoming restraint in their rejoicings over future successes, seeing that a number of English and

Russians were detained there who would probably never again after the war recommend the bathing-resort where they had been so frequently annoyed by their enemy's ostentatious displays of triumph. The flag-flying and bell-ringing therefore ceased to a great extent, but it was about the only instance where the Germans realized that there would ever be a "to-morrow" to be reckoned with.

In Nauheim we first made the near acquaintance of the *Frankfurter Zeitung*—a scurrilous rag, and as venomous as it was untruthful. From its pages we learnt that England had originated the war and had been preparing for years. Kitchener, it said, was quite unable to get recruits for his army beyond a total of two thousand men—he whistled in vain for more. It appeared there was also riot and revolution in India. With emotion it told its readers that the Hamburg merchants had fallen upon one another's necks and wept for joy when they heard about the sinking of the *Cressy* and the *Hogue*, etc. There were long leading articles daily with England for their everlasting theme, hot with indignation against her perfidy, hypocrisy, and above all her inhuman Dum-dum bullets, which they swore were being used both in the English and French Army—the contract-breaking, unscrupulous ones! Fur-

ther, England was quite hysterical with her absurd spy-scare, and actually cast honest, harmless Germans into East End prisons, where they were lodged in the same foul cells as common criminals. (What genteel gaols in London, West, they expected to find were not mentioned.) A villainous trick, too, the spiteful English had played upon the unhappy Germans who were trying to escape from their accursed land; the artful ones had cunningly arranged for a special train to take the victims to Harwich, and having successfully inveigled there the trustful refugees, pounced with their native malevolence upon all the men under the pretext of examining tickets and passports, sending the women and children on before to the boat. Then, at a given signal, when all these were safely on board, the ship quietly sailed off, the heartless captain deaf to the despairing cries of the defenceless females and little children, who finally arrived in their beloved Fatherland starving and penniless. Think only of the horror of a German girl, too, when, on looking through a number of *Punch* during her sojourn in England, insulting pictures of their dear Kaiser forced themselves before her shocked young eyes, depicted not only as Emperor, but caricatured in the shape of an *obscene bird*! Rumours had also gone

round that the English had been told that it was no longer incumbent on them to pay any debts they owed to German creditors.

It was surprising in the face of all these libels how little the peasants and lower-class people were influenced against the English, but there was a large touch of greatness and generosity in this simple folk, and they were full of the milk of human kindness—a postman as usual to the fore in this respect, also a noble bathchair-woman. The postman happened to know of a poor English lady whose funds had come to an end, and who had in consequence offered to wash up the crockery at her pension in return for her board and lodging, and he told her one morning that he had forty pounds saved up which she should have, and welcome, if she was in need.

The case of the bathchair-woman was not less touching and generous, for she and her husband, a crossing-sweeper, also put their savings at the disposal of an invalid lady his wife used to wheel out every day, telling her that though their cottage was only small, they did possess a tiny spare room, and they would be so glad if she would come to them as their honoured guest, supposing—as at present seemed likely—the English would have to spend the winter in Nauheim; they would

indeed do their best to make her happy and comfortable.

On another occasion Christine and one of the ladies in our hotel went into a shop to buy some beautiful lace which was being sold at half-price. "We have to sell it cheaply because of the war," explained the assistant; "ach, it is terrible! We never wanted this war, and I am sure you did not either. You and I are not enemies, it is ridiculous. Let us shake hands to show we are friends—yes!" And they did.

Others belonging to this class of people—washerwomen, fruit-women, bath-attendants, and cabbies, were equally amiably disposed towards us. The fruit-women, while selling us their choicest fruit at the hotel-door, poured out their hearts to us, confiding their hopes and fears for the fate of sweetheart, husband, brother or son to our ears, sure of receiving our sympathy; and our humble friends of palmier days did not disown us, for my mother's favourite bathwoman hailed her from a bath-house window one morning as she passed for a prowl in the park, and condoled with her on the durance-vile of the poor, sick English, proceeding next to tell her about all her own "dear ones" who had gone to the Front. "Sechs

Stück! (six of them!) Ach, it is too sad!" she exclaimed tearfully.

"Yes, you poor thing, it's really awful for you!" said mother compassionately, and the poor woman was quite overcome with emotion at the ready sympathy, and would have fallen upon her neck.

There was a nice "cabbie," too, who greeted me as I passed him one afternoon when I was hurrying back to the hotel from the town. Arrived there, I found him a few doors down. "Ach, Fräulein!" he said when he saw me, "had I known you were coming this way too, I could have given you a lift!"

With the mob and loafers it was a very different thing; they hated us and did not hesitate to show it. "Ach, das verfluchte Sauenhaus!" Winifred heard one man exclaim as he passed our hotel, whose inmates were known to be all English. "Sauenhaus" is a strong term of opprobrium for a pigsty, but no language was too offensive to apply to the British. One evening, a group of loafers catching sight of Ralph on his bedroom balcony, amused themselves by shouting up some choice though of course unintelligible abuse at him; but, "Ja-ja! Recht—recht! Oh ja!" yelled in cheerful agreement from above by Ralph, chuckling and enjoying himself hugely, sent

them nonplussed, baffled, and disappointed away. Later on, at the instigation of the Iron Cross hero, the name-board over our hotel door was covered up by order, likewise all other hotels and institutions that had English names. One of the guests suggested that our mansion might be rechristened "Fool's Paradise."

Our victory off Heligoland was first published not, as might be supposed, in the important papers, but in the Nauheim local rag. Christine saw it first, and rushed home to tell us. Of course there was great but quiet joy among our members, and William (also of Hohenzollern, his birth-place), who was a charming individual and anxious to give us our due when our turn came for a humble victory, nailed up the notice in the hall where the German successes were usually posted up. He did not see, he said, why the English should not have the satisfaction of seeing their victories announced when they did have them—they would be bound to read it in the papers sooner or later. Our leaflet did not remain up long, however, for the following morning as we were sitting about in the hall, one of the doctors called to see a patient, and on the way to the lift the paper caught his eye. He paused incredulously, walked up to it to assure himself

of its unblushing existence, surveyed it a moment, then without a word he vehemently tore it from its place and crushed it up in his hand, favouring us with a black look as he went on to his unfortunate patient. There were few doctors of his kind though, for most of them were kind, agreeable, and broad-minded. We heard that a day or two afterwards he accosted the proprietor in the open street, and loudly denounced him for allowing such scandalous proceedings in his hotel—*he*, a German, flaunting the enemies' triumphs! This sent the poor man home fuming; he had many cares in those days, for he lived in dread of ultimate bankruptcy. It was the first year of his proprietorship of the hotel, for which he was paying an enormous sum, and what promised to have been a brilliant season was now a miserable failure.

A few Germans in Nauheim knew to some extent how things were really going with the country, and received their information from other sources than the papers. They understood only too well how false their diplomats had played them, and realized how utterly inefficient they had been, contriving to make Germany hated by nearly every nation. "If we had our diplomats in Nauheim now, we should hang them, every one, for they are the

ruin of our country!" said one man in confidence to my father.

It was very interesting to hear the various opinions of the Germans on the war. What particularly touched them on the raw was "having Indian natives and uncivilized coloured people—in short, savages set on them," as they put it; "it was a stain on English culture." England's reason for declaring war on the ground that Germany had violated Belgian neutrality they regarded as the very flimsiest of excuses, though an invalid Doctor of Science admitted that the Germans had undoubtedly done wrong; but he told a friend of ours that war would do his country a world of good, and callous though it might seem, he said, and horrible though it was, the wholesale slaughter was necessary, for Germany was overpopulated, and there was no room for the race to expand, which was bad for a nation physically and otherwise.

Everybody was quite confident that Germany was going to win, and used to tell us with the utmost calm what would happen to us when England was under German rule. "You'll have to talk German, you know, and eat lots of Sauerkraut!" said one rather vaguely, when he was questioned on the matter. But their sure hope of victory was not on the

whole surprising when one read the endless articles that lauded and enlarged upon the prowess of their invincible army, and day after day the newspapers reported accounts innumerable of victory, progress, and success. Nevertheless, the tales we used to hear that the soldiers had told their friends or sweet-hearts differed somewhat from those we read. "Ah yes, my friend, but we had a bit of a retreat before we won that height, and it didn't look much like a victory even then!" one patient at the Institute had said privately to a friend—details that had not appeared in print.

Then for nearly three weeks the papers were absolutely silent regarding military operations. They were just as full of print as usual, but there was no matter behind it, and never a scrap of news. We guessed by that that luck was temporarily against the German Army—and more wounded arrived.

Another way we could tell how affairs stood was by the movements of the railway traffic. We were very close to the railway, and at certain periods, coinciding with the lack of definite news in the papers, we could hear the heavy troop-trains running all night, rushing reinforcements, first to one frontier, then to another, as the case might be.

We craved for an English newspaper in

those days, and my father was heard to remark that he would give ten shillings for an *Express*, while later he vowed he would sacrifice twenty to see even a *Daily News*; but nobody thought it at all an extravagant sum. At last someone did receive a *Daily Mail* by post, wrapped inside a Dutch paper. How we gloated over it! By the time it had gone the round of the English community it was falling to pieces at the folds. In September we were able to get Italian, Dutch, and American papers, which were allowed into the country; they were mostly a week or a fortnight old, the American ones even more, but that mattered little, for they told us many things we had been waiting to hear since the outbreak of war. What made them particularly interesting was the fact that their combined accounts differed largely from those in the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, and we read of one or two quite striking little events that had not appeared at all in the German papers. The Italian paper was one whose circulation had been stopped in France because it was so pro-German, which was curious, for it seemed to us rather the opposite, often criticising the Germans to their disadvantage. We used to flock to the reading-room when a number of the paper had been bought, and hear it trans-

lated by one of the ladies who was an Italian scholar; but that practice had to be given up, for one afternoon our attention was drawn to the fact that there were some new rules for alien enemies to observe, or rather, they were old ones that had been enforced at the outbreak of war, and then relaxed after the excitement had calmed down a little. Since we had been in Nauheim the only regulations had been that we were not to be out or abroad after 9 p.m., and the men had to report themselves at the police station every day or two. But now, on the leaflets posted up all over the town and nailed up on the trees down our street, we read that we were forbidden to go within fifty yards of the railway station or railway lines; neither were we allowed to leave the town or go outside the precincts unless we had a special police-pass. No written notes were to be passed from one hotel or pension to another except through the post. Lastly, it was strictly forbidden for a number of persons to dawdle about or assemble together in public buildings or rooms, in the streets, or anywhere under the open heavens without a permit. They used the term *zusammenrotten* in the last clause, which we always translated "to rot about together," and took our fancy very much; but

I find from a friend that its meaning is much more offensive than we were ever aware, and applies sooner to a "besotted rabble" than decorous English. Even the Russians, who, it must be admitted, were in the habit of obstructing the pathway of a morning in large gesticulating groups, scarcely merited that.

However, this last restriction prevented us openly congregating in reading- or drawing-room to listen to newspaper translations, so after that we usually used to pass a good deal of news on by word of mouth.

Autumn at last began to make itself felt in the air, the days became cooler, and the leaves on the trees showed signs of changing colour. The thought of the fireside at home made many of us more homesick than ever. The American Vice-Consul was doing all in his power and straining every nerve to induce the authorities to release us, and was always optimistic of results; but the Nauheim people themselves did not believe that we should be allowed to depart for many a long day. "Oh, you won't get away yet awhile!" said a hair-dresser, somewhat curtly, to one of the English ladies.

"H'm, er—where's the cemetery?" she inquired laconically.

"Well, you will not be buried there," he replied, for a wonder quick in the up-take; "*you'll* be buried at the cross-roads!"

We were given to understand that we were being detained in reprisal for our refusing to permit the Germans in England to return to their country. "Did you not see it in the *Frankfurter Zeitung*?" a German lady asked me. "Why, it says that the English prevent our people coming home!"

One morning early we saw one of the famous Zeppelins, the "Victoria Luise," sailing over on its way to Frankfurt. The townsfolk and "visitors," in deshabelle, hair-curlers, and shirt-sleeves, all rushed to their windows and balconies regardless of appearance, for a Zeppelin in war-trim was not a sight to be missed.

The weather became still colder, and we began to consider warmer clothing. At the commencement of war it had been almost impossible to communicate with friends in neutral countries, and even in Germany no letters might be written in a foreign language or sent closed up; but now things were better, letters to Prussia might be sent unopen, and it was possible to post correspondence to Holland, Italy, and Sweden, etc. Thus we were able to have money forwarded through

Holland, and as a German friend had lent my father fifty pounds in the meanwhile, we were again in comparatively comfortable circumstances—that is, we could afford newspapers, clothing, necessaries, and medicines, the last for my poor mother, who had the misfortune to fall ill soon after the Sedan anniversary—the cold of that auspicious night and the nervous strain and anxiety of the preceding weeks had told too much upon her health. We had a most kind and able little doctor, who had an equally nice wife, with whom his English patients or their relations had an open invitation to go to tea in the afternoon. The doctor was also instrumental in recovering a part of my luggage which had been missing ever since I left Cologne, and which was supposed to have been despatched to Frankfurt. Thanks to his importunity and cajolery with the railway officials there, it was at last produced from one of the station cellars. Till then I had walked in borrowed plumes belonging to my mother and the charitable Winifred, for the lost box had contained all my seasonable clothes, as well as my most treasured possessions of both material and sentimental value.

No sooner had some of us bought a few warm clothes and prepared ourselves to face

winter and Christmas in Nauheim, than the authorities again intimated that we really might expect an order of release very soon. The military doctor from Friedberg arrived one afternoon, and all the men were bidden to go to him and be examined in order to obtain a certificate proving that they were unfit for military service. We hoped on this ground that they would be allowed to go home as being harmless enemies of the country.

Accordingly they went to the pension, where the doctor was awaiting them, taking their purses with them. My father returned with ten shillings less in his ; he had tendered a ten-shilling note to be changed, for the certificates cost five marks ; but the medical man pocketed the whole amount and thanked him kindly, saying that the Red Cross Society (to which the funds were to be devoted) would be *very* grateful and would find it *most* useful. A few days later news came from the Consulate that we should be allowed to leave Nauheim after the Russians. The day for their departure was to have been September 20th, but they were just celebrating a religious feast, and flatly refused to go in the middle of it. Eventually the Russians left, with the exception of

young men of military age, or any that held an official position in Russia, and travelled via Sweden. On the evening before they left we heard that a paper had been issued in which it was said that anyone showing favour or kindness to the Russians on the journey would be liable to punishment. Very few people saw it, though, for it was suppressed almost immediately it was published.

Permission was now granted to the English to go, but this applied only to women, children, and boys under the age of seventeen—no men. We had half expected this, but the news was none the less a sad blow, and many of the women decided to stay behind with their husbands. My mother, even if she would have left father, was scarcely strong enough to undertake a journey, so it was arranged that the two boys should go home with Christine and Winifred, and I should remain with the parents; having all my winter clothes with me, I was the best prepared for the cold weather, and I was also not sorry to stay on.

The bustle and excitement was great; I should think the town was nearly cleared of provender baskets, thermos flasks, cheap knives and forks, mugs, and portable pro-

visions, for the prospective travellers had been cautioned to take plenty of food with them on the journey.

Said a lady on a farewell visit to one of these shops—or it might have been to the hair-dresser—"Well, you see, we're going at last!" Then she added flippantly: "We hear you'll follow us in a fortnight!"

"Ach, leider geht es nicht so schnell!" (unfortunately, it can't be managed so quickly!) he said quite gravely, with regret in his tones.

A special train for the English was leaving Frankfurt on September 26th, and would take them as far as the Dutch frontier. They could not promise to send them farther, though it was possible the train might go as far as Flushing. If, however, they were dropped at the frontier, a Dutch train should be there to pick them up.

On the evening of the 25th the hall of the hotel was packed with travellers and non-travellers, the proprietor and William hovering with sad countenances in the background. The travellers had been summoned there by the Committee to be told exactly what arrangements had been made for the journey, and to have the details explained. Passports were

given round and money for the fares collected, for one member of the Committee was going over to Frankfurt early the next morning to buy all the tickets and engage rooms at the hotels for the night which the happy band of pilgrims would have to spend there before catching their special train on the Saturday morning. Authorities at the police station affectionately requested those who were leaving Germany to take no letters or papers with them—luggage would be searched, and anything found concealed there would be confiscated and penalties would have to be paid. It had been reported to the police that one of the ladies had been overheard in the street to say that she was taking over a letter for one of us, and would hide it down her stocking. To avoid unpleasantness, then, it would be wiser not to take these risks.

The following day, Friday, saw the long-delayed departure of about sixty English from Nauheim. Some went to the station in cabs, but most footed it, bearing handbags, hat-boxes, and other sundry packages; noticeable among these were Ralph and David, laden like pack-asses, each with an enormous bulging "Rucksack," or tourist's knapsack on his back filled with food for four, and forgotten

treasures packed in at the last minute. Then with a final flourish of handkerchiefs, waving of hands, and salutes of every kind, they all disappeared round the corner, and we saw them no more.

V

EXIT

THE first few days after the others had left were unspeakably dull for all of us. The already half-bare trees added to the now desolate appearance of the town, and the chill winds chased the dry brown leaves through the empty streets where but a week ago the English had taken their walks abroad and the Russians had resorted for their morning gossip. On our disconsolate prowls round the town we always seemed to see one or another of our departed friends coming towards us with her characteristic gait or clad in the clothes in which we had been wont to recognize her. Alas! it was only hallucination! It was just as if Nauheim, although she had allowed her alien enemies to depart, had yet succeeded in detaining their ghosts.

Gretchen and Lisa, the two maids in our hotel, benefited greatly by the exodus of the female enemy, and reaped a goodly harvest

from the belongings left behind, for everybody, wishing to have as light and as little luggage as possible, had bestowed as many of their personal effects as they could spare upon the delighted damsels. I came upon them the evening after the general clearance, seated on the upstairs landing sofa, surrounded by a multitude of familiar hats, and having the time of their lives unpicking, fixing, shaping, and retrimming them. They and the kitchen-maids had come into possession of two hats apiece, while downstairs, they said, they had a perfect bootshop. "As for die Frau A," said Gretchen, "she kept saying, 'Here, take this'; and 'Here, you can have that,' till I thought Lisa and I would have had the whole of her baggage between us!"

"And think," put in Lisa, beaming with pleasure, "she gave us that beautiful grey silk dress she used to wear. Said she didn't want it!"

Christine sent us a card from Folkestone as soon as all the travellers had arrived there safely. The stewardess obligingly took it back to Holland with her, where she eventually posted it. They had travelled with a great many more English women and children, who came from Homburg, Munich, and Berlin; and Winifred told us afterwards that one

resourceful lady was smuggling her son of seventeen through, having registered his age on the passport as sixteen and twelve months!

Some days later a vague, but startling, telephone message came from the American Consulate in Frankfurt, which, as far as we could make out, asked whether the Z's, the X's, and ourselves would be prepared to leave Germany almost immediately. Being in German—for no foreign language was allowed to be used on the telephone—we were not sure that we had heard aright, so Mr. Z obtained a police-pass to go to Frankfurt, and went to have a personal interview with our tried and faithful friend the Vice-Consul and find out facts. On his return he told us that permission had been granted him to leave Germany with his wife and her maid on October 1st, travelling via Frankfurt, Munich, and Lindau to Switzerland. My father, mother, and self were to follow by the same route on October 3rd, and Mr X and his wife on October 5th, all on condition that we should remain in Switzerland three weeks on parole before returning home. Our passports should be returned in time for us to travel.

Why we were singled out by the authorities for this unexpected favour we do not know even now, especially as, contrary to our hopes

and expectations, none of the others followed us—for some little time, at any rate.

My mother was fortunately getting stronger by degrees, and now went out for a short time every day; but we were very glad that we should be able to break the long journey twice, with a good rest between the stages. The packing was not as bad as it might have been, as we had practically lived in our boxes the last few weeks, under the impression that we might all be allowed to return to England any day. After packing, there were visits to the police station to be made, as the men had to sign their names and bind themselves over to keep parole in Switzerland, which of course they gladly did.

October 1st dawned, and Mr. and Mrs. Z, ready and prepared for the journey, spent the morning by their boxes, waiting expectantly for their passports which did not come. Their train-time was long past, and still there was no sign of any of the passports, except Mrs. Z's maid's and mine, which had arrived the evening before. Finally, a message came from the police to say that the passports had got lost in the post, but that duplicates should be drawn up at once. In any case, it was now out of question for Mr. and Mrs. Z to start their journey that day. The passports, when

at last they were delivered, were all dated for the same day—October 2nd. Here was another difficulty, for it had been impressed upon us that we were on no account to travel all together or to stay at the same hotels on the journey. The reason for this restriction was not given, but we supposed they were trying to get the older invalid men out of the country as unobtrusively as possible, and hoped that in this way we should be able to cover our identity before the hostile populace or mob better than if we went *en bloc*.

In the end it was decided that Mr. and Mrs. Z should leave on the morrow by the 12.50 train to Frankfurt, where with luck they would be just in time to catch the two o'clock express to Munich. We should leave Nauheim an hour or so later, and Mr. and Mrs. X at five o'clock. Arrived at Frankfurt, we should have to spend the night at different hotels, and then make inquiries about the trains to Munich.

The following day Mr. and Mrs. Z left without further hindrance, accompanied by two friends who saw them safely into the Munich train. We in our turn arrived at Nauheim station at about three o'clock, to find Mr. and Mrs. X waiting for the same train; but keeping to instructions as far as possible,

we travelled in separate compartments, and were seen off by one of our less fortunate friends, our hotel proprietor, and a jolly-looking police constable.

At Frankfurt we lost sight of the X's for a time, as we took longer looking after our luggage; and then, what was our dismay on entering the Bristol Hotel to find Mr. X already settled there—each having thought the other had engaged rooms at the Kaiserhof! But this was as nothing compared with the consternation of the American Vice-Consul at finding any of us there at all, for the Kommandant had made our passports available only up to midnight of October 3rd, and we ought, therefore, to be out of the country by then.

“But that's impossible—absolutely impossible!” exclaimed the unhappy men.

This was true; even travelling straight on without a break, the time allotted to us for our departure was too short.

“Then you must travel via Stuttgart; that is not such a long way round, and there's a train leaving in half an hour,” suggested the Vice-Consul.

“No, we mustn't do that; it says quite distinctly on the passes that we are only to travel via Munich; we can't go in the face of that!”

We were all utterly distracted, and the Vice-Consul was at his wits' end to know what to do. There was, in fact, nothing to be done, for what the Kommandant had written he had written, and it was final. It was useless to appeal to him to alter the date, said the Vice-Consul who declared that he simply dared not face the autocrat with the papers again.

A woman, however, was to be the saving of us. We had agreed beforehand to share the services of a courier who would look after us and our respective luggage, and would accompany us as far as Lindau. The Agent now sent his wife round to the hotel to make the final arrangements. She was a shrewd, capable-looking woman, with a glib tongue as well as a persuasive manner, and she now fell into the breach caused by the unlucky passports.

"Give me, please, your papers," she said, and explained further: "I wish to take them to the Kommandant. I will myself tackle him, and we will see what can be done. It is possible he has by now finished supper, and will be in a good mood."

So saying, she departed on her errand of mercy, leaving us with revived hopes.

In the meantime we and the X's decided to risk staying in the hotel together; but we

agreed simply to ignore one another, and to continue doing so during the journey.

An hour or so later the Agent's wife returned triumphant from her mission, having found the Kommandant sitting over his last glass of wine, and consequently he was, as she had hoped, in a more amiable and tractable frame of mind than he was wont to enjoy in business hours. He succumbed almost at once to her tactful wheedling, and with the greatest docility changed the date from October 3rd to the 4th, which gave us more reasonable time to complete our journey. We breathed again.

"But there is one more detail we have overlooked," the good lady now remarked; "you have not had the passports viséd by the Swiss Consul, and until that is done you will not be permitted to enter Switzerland. The Consul will not be at home now, and I do not know in any case where to find him; but I will inquire, and then take the passports round to him in the morning."

The worst difficulty had been overcome, however, and we retired to bed with easier minds.

Frankfurt at night was full of activity, and seemed even busier than in the daytime. By the light of a bright full moon and the few street-lamps one could see the crowds of people

thronging the station square, and the numerous motor-cars threading their way among them and dodging the other traffic, while the newspaper-boys bawled out the latest news, and red and green lights switched on and off from the roofs of the high buildings, advertising cigars, beer, or chocolate.¹ In the morning there were few people to be seen—practically no men—and not much traffic except for military cars and trolleys. The people at the hotel treated us with unwilling courtesy, but one could not expect extreme cordiality in a place where they had gone as far as to stone Englishwomen in the streets—though, on the other hand, they had been very kind indeed to our Nauheim friends when they had spent the night at Frankfurt but a week ago.

At midday, our passports being satisfactory and in order, we set out to the station under the guardianship of the courier. He had some difficulty in finding places for us in the Munich train, as it was already half full of wounded soldiers from the Front; and having secured seats, who knew how long we might be allowed to remain in them? Eventually, though, the clever fellow found two seats for Mr. and Mrs. X in one carriage, and three for us in another.

“For goodness’ sake, don’t be heard talking

English!" he whispered imploringly ere he left us to find his own compartment; and we assured him we would be particularly careful not to use that tongue—if, indeed, we conversed at all.

In a few minutes a good-looking military doctor peeped in at the door.

"Any seats free here?" he inquired. "I want room for some of the wounded."

We had seen two ladies arranging their belongings on the opposite rack beforehand, but they had disappeared for the moment. However, after some hesitation, we said the seats were taken, and he left us in possession and peace. I went after him with the offer of a small camp-stool when we had managed to extricate it from among our rugs and straps; but he thanked me with a charming smile, and said he had already found seats enough for his men. Presently the two ladies—an elderly dame with her daughter—returned to the carriage. The younger woman beamed at me.

"Is it not *splendid*?" she cried enthusiastically. "The men there tell me they have beaten the French back quite a long way! Isn't it most pleasing?"

"M'm!" I murmured in a non-committal voice, seeing that response was expected, and

I smiled to take the edge off any suspected indifference or lack of warmth.

My father was sitting in a corner with a book, and had for diplomatic reasons assumed the rôle of an amiable but very deaf old gentleman; my mother sat between us, and feigned sleep, and I, in my corner by the window, was to all intents and purposes deep in a German novel. Now I became still more absorbed in it, for, noticing the measuring glances and the friendly smiles showered upon us, I recognized with dismay in the two ladies that type of travelling companion determined to make friends with fellow-passengers, and intent on showing interest in them and their concerns. On a long journey such people may be very welcome *pour passer le temps*, and I confess that under ordinary circumstances I enjoy them tremendously; but their advent in this case was distinctly inconvenient, our sole desire being to keep very much to ourselves and to avoid revealing our nationality. It was now two o'clock, and we were not due at Munich till ten. How should we manage to resist their pertinacious and friendly advances all that length of time without capitulating?

Meantime I read zealously, and conversation between the two ladies was somewhat desultory, till the younger one left the compartment

to talk to the wounded soldiers down the corridor. When she came back I looked up from my book, thinking it was the ticket-collector; that was opening enough for her. "Do you know," she began, addressing me, "those poor things out there have come right from the Front? They tell me they've had practically nothing to eat but green apples for the last three days, and they say that bread is very scarce at the Front; there's plenty of meat to be had—yes, more than they can eat, but no bread."

"Poor things!" I said.

"Yes—*nicht wahr*—but I am glad we did not have any of the men travelling in here with us—I was so thankful we were already full up at Frankfurt. You know, they smell so, the unfortunates; they can't help it, of course, but it makes the compartment so stuffy—don't you think so? It would be very bad and trying for my mother, and also for the lady, I think—she looks very delicate."

"Yes," I replied, "she's been ill, and is not very strong yet."

"Ach, poor thing! and she has a long journey before her?"

"Fairly long."

"Yes, we do not reach Munich till ten o'clock."

Talk languished after that, and I returned to my book, but not for long. We came presently to beautiful mountainous country, here and there thickly wooded with trees glorious in their autumn colours of burnished copper and gold; then picturesque villages, some with old tumble-down houses, were seen nestling in the valley. The younger lady gazed at all the splendour from the window without speaking for some time. "Ah, is it not beautiful—perfectly charming?" she said at last, addressing her mother really, but looking with an inviting glance in my direction for assent. Apparently satisfied of my evident appreciation of the loveliness of the countryside, she took her seat again and picked up the threads of conversation about the soldiers.

"In Nauheim, where we have come from, there are numbers of wounded men!" she began.

"Oh?"

"Yes, a great many of the hotels and pensions were given up to be converted into hospitals, and they are now quite full. But, you know, one of the greatest mistakes they made there was to allow such young girls to do the nursing. Why, some of them were not more than sixteen, but they had gone through a short course of Red Cross ambulance work,

and attended a few classes, and so, of course, they thought they could nurse. The proper nurses dislike having to supervise the work of these inexperienced young things very much, for it all has to be done over again, and they can't afford to waste time like that when there is already so much to get through. Besides, the soldiers themselves object to being handled by mere children!"

"Yes, of course, I expect they feel nervous and afraid of the mistakes they know such obvious novices are sure to make!" I put in as she paused for breath.

"Exactly! It is such a pity, though, that these girls were not made to stay at home or kept at school—there are hundreds of properly trained nurses only too anxious to work; it isn't as if there were any shortage of them. And if there were, there are any amount of fully-trained Americans who are always offering their services, but the authorities are awfully slow about accepting them. Yes, the poor soldiers have a lot to put up with sometimes! There was another scandalous affair at a hospital-pension called the 'Israelitish Home,' where the patients did not get their rations for some reason or other; and what do you think the landlady gave those poor sick men? Beer and cheese!"

"Oh, what a shame! And she would not have to provide for them out of her own pocket either, would she?"

"Oh no!"

"And that is scarcely invalid diet!"

"No indeed; but she wasn't a nice woman at all. And beer above all things! It is strictly prohibited, and it is also bad for the wounds. I know all about that kind of thing, for I have trained for nursing. Look, I'll show you my diploma." And she produced it from her bag for me to examine and admire.

"I always had to take that about with me when I went out in Nauheim," she continued. "I had to use it in place of a passport, for, do you know, they were always taking me for an Englishwoman and stopping me in the streets!"

"But how unpleasant!" I said.

"It was rather awkward!" she admitted, though I think at the bottom of her heart she was not so displeased at having the looks and appearance of an Englishwoman, and felt rather flattered than otherwise by the error. "There were a good many English in Nauheim, but we were residents there, so you would have thought the people ought to have known us fairly well; but then, it is a population that is always changing."

Her mother meanwhile had been repeating scraps of our conversation for father's uncomprehending ears, and describing Nauheim to him; but he played up gallantly, smiling benignly, and putting in an interested "So so? Ach!" when occasion seemed to require it. Now a short respite came in the shape of supper, for which we were all grateful, ourselves for more than one reason. In the saloon we saw Mr. and Mrs. X, and incidentally were told by them, while we were surreptitiously exchanging greetings, that the soldiers in their carriage were in as starving a condition as our fellow-passenger had described, and Mr. X had been treating them to rolls and ham, for which they were more than thankful. They said there had been too much champagne flowing in France.

It was too much to expect, after once having become so talkative and friendly with the other occupants of our carriage, that we should all be allowed to relapse into silence again on our return from the dining-saloon, and this proved the case, for no sooner were we in our places again than Nauheim became once more the topic of conversation. The ladies told me that they were removing from there to Munich; the bathing resort was dull in winter, they said—so cold and horrible. Did I know the place?

Yes, we had been there sometimes.

Lately?

Yes, that, too—in fact, we had just spent a few weeks there—my parents had been undergoing the cure. It seemed a nice little town, but I could quite imagine they would find Munich gayer and much more attractive in winter. One always read such delightful descriptions of the town and life there. Had the lady read So-and-so?

Truth to say, I felt the less said about Nauheim the better, and it was a great relief now when the talk turned upon books. As we stopped in one station I saw that we were due at Munich in half an hour. The sixth passenger, a silent man, had left us, and the younger lady now invited me to take the seat next to her, so that my mother, who was really asleep with her head nodding uncomfortably, could lie down.

“It makes so much difference if you can put your feet up on a long journey,” she said, “especially for invalids; I have learnt that travelling with my mother. Shall you have to travel farther, or does your journey end in Munich?”

“No,” I said, “we hope to go on to Switzerland to-morrow.”

“Oh, how delightful! You are lucky. It is

such a beautiful country. Tell me, are you foreigners by any chance—American, or perhaps English?" she queried.

"English," I replied. The truth was out, and I looked to see a change of feeling reflected in her pleasant, winsome face; but her expression remained as kind and as interested as before, and her manner as cordial, so I told her more about ourselves, as there was no longer any need for reserve, and she had told me so much of their affairs.

"Of course, we don't hold the English people personally responsible for the war," she said, "but we think that England has behaved very shabbily. It is very grieving, though, that the two countries should be at war." She had two or three English friends, and told me about them till our arrival in Munich, where our confidences were necessarily cut short, and we took an affectionate leave of one another.

The station was very full; there were passengers crowding the platforms, and the other side of the barrier swarms of curious and anxious citizens waited to receive our train-load of wounded. We judged it better to give them time to disappear and allow the multitude to disperse before silently following the courier out of the station to the hotel

across the street. Here the proprietor and his staff welcomed us most courteously, and we were treated very kindly. My apartment was the prettiest, most luxurious and artistically upholstered room it is possible to imagine for an hotel.

Our train for Lindau left at 7.50 the next morning, and we were up betimes—a dainty breakfast of coffee, jam, and most delectable rolls, being brought up to our rooms before starting. In spite of the early hour, the station was thronged with travellers of every description. A great many appeared to be tourists or trippers—brawny-looking men dressed in Tyrolese costume, women likewise, and carrying knapsacks and Alpine sticks. Probably, being Sunday, they were on pleasure bent. Our train, however, was fairly empty till the first stop, when it was filled up with wounded soldiers. Three were put in our compartment. They were looking miserably ill and bloodless, and had been five days on the journey. One sitting next to my mother with his arm bound up in a sling had his tunic and trousers saturated with blood, which I stared at with sickly fascination, and was consequently in time to save him setting fire to the newspaper he was trying to hold in the same hand as his lighted cigar, which was beginning to burn the paper. He

told the military doctor who looked in now and again that the field-surgeon had said his wound was caused by a Dum-dum bullet. It had not yet been extracted.

At Kempten, to our great relief, the men were all helped out, and we immediately threw open every window, for the smoke of varied tobaccos mingled with the reek of iodoform, had been almost intolerable, and under the influence of that heavy atmosphere and the sight of a gory uniform we had been growing very restive. Indeed, I was amazed how stoically mother had borne it; and she, judging from the hue of my complexion, was no less surprised that I had not succumbed. We realized what we had been spared the day before.

The remaining part of the journey we travelled alone, with only one civilian who took no notice of us. After Immensee, with its calm, blue lake and neat, brightly-painted little chalet-houses, the landscape became more and more Swiss in character; sharp, bluish mountains rose majestically from verdant, fertile valleys, or overshadowed still and lonely lakes, while in the distance the first snowy peaks of the Alps showed clear and crystal against a patch of blue sky.

We were due at Lindau at one o'clock, and

the steamer for Romanshorn, on the Swiss shores of Lake Constanz, left at about two o'clock. After leaving the railway station at Lindau we had to walk a little way through the town to the pier, and at the Custom-house door our passports were examined before we could proceed to the little hall to submit to the lengthy business of having our luggage searched. The greatest fear of the officials there was that we should have letters hidden among our belongings; but they took our word for it when we declared we had none, which was fortunate, for they were then not so diligent and slow in their investigations of our possessions. But there were still two or three trunks to be gone through waiting outside on a rolley on the quay-side, and our time was nearly up; in all probability we should miss the boat if we waited, and it was the only one crossing.

My father, very naturally, was therefore not minded to wait; but neither did he intend leaving the luggage behind. Accordingly he watched his opportunity, and while the officials' heads were deep in other people's trunks, he slipped out unobserved, hailed the rolley-porter, and with an authoritative wave of the hand directed him to wheel the lot on to the steamer. The man obeyed promptly and with-

out demur, and we made no further tarrying, but followed with all speed. At the gangway we said farewell to the trusty courier, and hurried on board, where, as soon as the vessel was well under way, Mr. X and my father solemnly shook hands and congratulated one another on their escape, afterwards drinking to the joyful occasion in one of the light wines provided in the saloon. My mother and I remained on deck, gratefully breathing in the fresh air, and, as we sailed away over the turquoise waters to Liberty, watched with conflicting feelings of relief and regret the brightly-coloured towers on the little Lindau quay become smaller and smaller, and the hazy German shores slowly recede.

THE END

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