

is stated that among the soldiers of the Allies in France there is faith in the immortality of the soul which has arisen from an innate sense of justice; and there, face to face with the exceeding sinfulness of sin, skeptics are losing their skepticism in the belief that there is a per-

sonal devil, a veritable hell, and also a God, a Heaven, and a Saviour in the Lord Jesus Christ.

What the world needs today is God, and God is here. But He cannot save the world until the world is willing to be saved.

## An Alert in Paris

ELIZABETH CHRISTITCH

NEWS of the American victory at St. Mihiel spread a wave of festivity through Paris. Hardly had we heard of the deliverance of this important town and its surrounding villages than details of the operation, incidents of the victorious troops' reception by the freed inhabitants, and a hundred touching stories of family reunions were related by persons in touch, however indirectly, with the fighters at the front. We knew that the colored American troops had been so frantically acclaimed in St. Mihiel that in every snapshot taken they appeared laughing from ear to ear as if they had just come from a holiday. Little children ran to them offering small tricolor flags as souvenirs, and adults shook them by the hand with words of thanks. Deliverance from German rule meant much more to St. Mihiel than to the towns on the Marne, subjugated since March, only. St. Mihiel was four years cut off from the mother-land of France, knew very little of what was taking place in the world, and looked on the American army as if it had stepped down from heaven. As soon as the men in khaki marched through the streets the population that had escaped deportation by the retreating Germans rushed forth from their hiding-places singing and shouting with joy. Soon the strains of the *Marseillaise* echoed from shattered houses where half-wrecked pianos were still to be found. Tables were spread in rooms possessing neither windows nor doors, and grave elderly ladies, dressed in antiquated silk toilets with headgear that had once been Parisian, stopped the American officers in the streets and requested the favor of their company at the family repast. Crowds of children surrounded the heroes wherever they went, and in the midst of the animated scene, hurrying through and past it on their usual errands of mercy from hospital to refuge asylum, were the brown and black habits of the religious Sisters who minister to the victims of the devastated frontier towns. These indefatigable workers got an emphatic: "God bless you!" from the American troops and an emotional *Dieu vous le rende, chères soeurs!* from the relieved French citizens.

After commenting upon and discussing the military move that led to General Pershing's great victory at St. Mihiel, with all its probable and possible results in the general campaign, Paris lay down to rest in calm satisfaction to be awakened at half-past one by weird, blood-curdling moans and shrieks resounding all over the city. Surely nothing more sinister than the hoot of the siren has ever been invented to strike terror into human hearts.

The Irish Banshee wail must be something like it. Just outside our window the persistent warning seemed to accumulate its frenzy, so that the crash of firing which drowned its pitiful plaint came as a relief to the listeners. At first the shots were desultory. Then the sudden, quick, fierce volleys told that the "Gothas" were forcing their way in. Would they succeed? Yes. After the multiple cannon discharges came the louder, the unmistakable reverberation of an aeroplane bomb, another, and again another, distinctly audible through the intensified thunder of the French guns. The enemy had found a passage through the terrific barrage of living fire and steel which was constantly renewed to confront them. Even now they were launching their murderous missiles on our heads, and it seemed as if all Paris would be laid waste, so frequent and violent came the sounds of falling bombs from all parts of the city. But the brave cannoneers never relaxed. Steady and strong went the guns of defense, fewer and fewer came the sharp bomb detonations. By this time we were so inured to the duel that we no longer sat up involuntarily in bed at a particularly deafening report and we could begin to recollect and define our sensations. The most pleasant of these was certainly felt when we perceived a lull in the cannonade and heard the cheery notes of the *berloque* telling us that the danger was over. Never did trumpet give forth more welcome melody. It is sounded by firemen who rush through the streets in auto-cars to reassure the people, and is composed of one continuous, emphatic, staccato bass note serving as accompaniment to an elegant soprano arpeggio, so joyous in itself that it breathes reassurance and triumph.

With true feelings of gratitude and relief we resumed our interrupted slumber. Not for long, however. After a short interval the Banshee again raised its plaintive wail, and again there was a stampede of hotel guests along the corridor. This time we resolved to meet the danger in company, or rather to see for ourselves the cellar life so often described as one of the features of Paris social life during air-raids. The people we found moving to the lower regions of the house were mostly strangers. The French seemed to know how many minutes they could exactly dispose of, and descended much later, after having very evidently put the finishing touches to their subterranean toilet. A couple of Englishmen, in pajama-suits covered by thick waterproofs, looked disgusted at the whole business. Most of the

assembly, cross at being disturbed a second time in one night, remarked on the nasty temper of the "Boches," and one lady, drawing her elegant wraps about her, declared in a nonchalant nasal twang that, "with regard to these air fights in Yurup they would be much more interesting if arranged for the daytime." A jovial French captain, smart in new uniform, told us his life was very precious and he never risked it by staying in an upper story instead of seeking safety in the cellar. He was leaving Paris on the morrow to rejoin his regiment near the Somme. A handsome French matron, very stately and reserved, became much agitated on hearing that a great conflagration was observed in the direction of Montmartre. "Provided only they do not destroy the Basilica of the Sacred Heart!"

Somebody that had been to reconnoitre, i. e., to gather news at the street door, was able to reassure us on this point. Only the day before one of us had visited this magnificent monument of French devotion where perpetual adoration is ensured during the night by laymen who volunteer.

While we sat in groups, chatting, or, in one corner, saying the rosary, in the clean-swept cellar furnished with cane chairs, hearing now but a muffled cannonade, we were struck by the total absence of anger or spite towards the aggressor. The Gothas were making a second attempt but they were bound to be driven off. One person lamented for the wretched men ordered out to burn and slay. "Fancy their state of mind! They are not all demons. They must suffer agonies of remorse."

Others supposed an absolutely different mentality in the enemy to that of the Entente men sent out to thwart them. These latter, of course, acted in righteous defense and the raids on German towns, we all heartily agreed, were necessary retaliation as the unique preventive.

With regard to the present attack some wiseacres had so clearly foreseen it that they would have been astonished had it not taken place! The night was so beautifully clear and bright that the Gothas were bound to profit of it. And that they would deliver a retort somewhere for their defeat at St. Mihiel was a foregone conclusion. Soon even such small retorts would be out of their power as the smashing process of the Americans would be complete and final. We were all ready to believe that the row going on outside was not very severe, and could well be borne, especially in a comfortable bomb-proof cellar like ours, when somebody ran in to tell us the *berloque* was once more resounding outside and we could regain our apartments. It was half-past four and we were nothing loth to lie down after three hours of excitement.

Next day we learned that the attacking force had consisted of several fleets that attempted from various points to force an entrance. Twenty-two thousand kilos of flaming projectiles had been thrown and much damage had been wrought. There were fifteen grievously and six mortally wounded, among the latter being a dignitary

of the Senate, a mother of six children whose husband had an arm torn off, and a young girl student. All these victims had exposed themselves with thoughtless curiosity either in the streets or at open windows and warnings were again issued to the citizens to take cover as soon as they heard the siren alarm. Two hostile aeroplanes had been brought to earth. One in a forest outside the city walls and the crew of probably three men had managed to escape and hide somewhere in the vicinity. There was no doubt that they would soon be tracked down. Another fell within the precincts of Paris, its occupants, an officer and two men, being found dead. The mangled corpses of the three raiders were given honorable burial by their noble enemies, and it was an occasion to recall the pity expressed for them by the chivalrous person who had said: "They must feel very unhappy while executing their terrible orders."

May God deliver them and all Europe from the military caste that made the science of destruction what it is today!

## French Catholics and the War Orphans

COMTESSE DE COURSON

WE believe that the remarkable articles, published in AMERICA, from the pen of J. Harding Fisher, S.J., must have alarmed many American Catholics, who, without realizing that they were fostering evil, contributed to the fund started for the orphans of the war. Moved by their generous desire to assist these little ones, they disregarded certain words of warning from those who realized the danger ahead, and at this we can hardly wonder. It is difficult to understand that a large and noble country should be governed by a minority, that a nation where Catholics are the majority should be the prey of atheists and free-thinkers; in one word, it is almost impossible for outsiders to distinguish between the real soul of France and its Government.

Yet this soul of France reveals itself more vigorously than ever under the stress of suffering. At the front, for instance, the soldier priests and students and the Catholic laymen, officers and men have, on all sides, won golden opinions by their splendid attitude under fire and the excellent influence they exercise over their companions. Far from the front other Catholics, who cannot serve in the ranks, are fighting other battles and doing valuable work for their country. Some assist our soldiers in their moral difficulties and material trials, others watch over the rising generation, who are called upon to fill the empty places and to build up a new and better France. The education of children is always a sacred duty, but it becomes doubly so in a country where thousands of men in their prime have fallen on the battlefield. The French Catholics know this and their anxiety to provide for the Catholic training of the war orphans is stimulated by their knowledge of the pressure exercised by the Government upon many widows, whose

