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FRANCE AT WAR

By
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I

Since the outbreak of war many articles have appeared in the papers dealing with conditions in France, and the war correspondents have narrated what has been happening at the front from day to day, but I do not believe that we in England yet realize how intense the French effort is and with what determination the whole country has applied its energies to the prosecution of the struggle. Nor do I think we yet realize the spirit that has enabled the nation to accept with fortitude and resignation the sacrifices they have been called upon to make. I have spent six weeks making a survey of the activities of France; I have been to the front, I have visited a naval base; I have seen the factories in which are manufactured all things necessary for modern war, from great cannon to shirts for the troops; I have stayed in the districts to which the refugees from Alsace and Lorraine have been evacuated; I have talked to hundreds of people, from generals in command of army corps to the humble priests of country parishes; and though twice the time I had at my disposal would have been needed to give me even a bird's-eye view of all that strenuous endeavour, I have at least learnt a variety of things which I think it would be well for the people of this country to know.

An acquaintance of mine was spending the summer holiday in his native village, and because he has an official position, he received, before the announcement was made to the public, a telegram telling him that the order for mobilization had been signed. He was walking to the post office when he met a poor woman whom he had known all his life. She was coming up from the *lavoir*—the public wash-house—with a load of washing that she was taking home to dry, and since he knew that her husband and both her sons would be called up, he stopped and told her the news. She shifted a little the heavy bundle on her shoulder, her eyes filled with tears and she said: "*Nous ferons ce que nous pourrons; le Bon Dieu fera le reste*" ("We will do what we can; God will do the rest").

In 1914 the call to the colours was accepted with enthusiasm, men with flowers in their hats joined up shouting and singing; "À Berlin," they cried; the cafés were full of excited, eager people; it seemed a thrilling adventure they were starting on. But this time the spirit was different. There was no enthusiasm; there was determination and an angry acquiescence, a firm courage and resignation. Everyone knows with what efficiency the mobilization was completed. But what many people are apt to forget is that the French nation has been mobilized three times in one year. In September of 1938, in the following March, and then again last August men were taken away from their peaceful avocations, the peasant from his field, the working man from his factory, the clerk from his office, all the able-bodied men of France between the ages of twenty and fifty, to put on their uniforms and assist the country in its peril. Three times in one year every activity in the pleasant land of France was dislocated. Is it surprising that they said: "It is too much"? Is it surprising that they said to one another: "This time we must make an end of it: *il faut en finir*"! They set their teeth. I think there are few men in France who do not share the common feeling that this time they are going to see it through.

They are going to fight now to the bitter end, and they will never accept a peace that will expose them again, perhaps in a short time, to the affliction, loss and inconvenience of another mobilization. I have known the French all my life; I have never known them more calm, more resolute and more single-minded. They have a sufficient confidence in their leaders and a whole-hearted trust in the generals who command their great armies. Everyone who has lived long in France knows how bitter are its political antagonisms, and none can have seen without admiration the way in which, when the country was in peril, these were composed; but everyone who knows France must have seen it without surprise, for however bitter the quarrels that agitate the French in times of peace—and really the foreigner gets the impression that they are the breath of their nostrils—you can be certain that when the occasion demands it they will be set aside to be resumed at a more convenient moment, and each man will combine with his neighbour to defend the land which they all so proudly love. What ignorance of the French temper it showed when the Germans thought that in France they were fighting a house divided against itself!

I think what has most impressed me during the journeys I have taken from end to end of France is the immense, the splendid seriousness with which the French are confronting their ordeal. It is not honour and glory they are fighting for—that will come, but that is by the way—it is security. We live on an island in England, and, whatever the deluded Hitler may say, that is a great safeguard. It is many centuries since an invader has set foot upon 'this precious stone set in the silver sea'. It has been very different in France. Twice in seventy years the German armies have invaded it, laying waste the land, burning houses and farms, bombarding churches and cathedrals, destroying factories; and three times peaceful populations have been forced to desert their homes, taking such of their poor belongings as they could carry with them, and seek refuge among strangers. When I was on the front I met one of the ablest generals that the army possesses; he told me his mother was eighty-six and she had seen Germany at war with France three times. "It is too much," he said. And when I was visiting the refugees I talked with a funny little old woman with white hair. "I'm over eighty," she told me, "and this is the third time I've had to flee from my house in Lorraine." And she added: "It is too much." It gave me a curious little pang in my heart to hear that poor old peasant woman use the self-same words that the distinguished general had used.

In England politicians have been making speeches, journalists have been writing articles and correspondents have been writing to the papers, about the war aims. And much of what has been said and written has been disconcerting to the French, for it has seemed to them that there is in Great Britain a strong current of opinion which on this question is not in accord with their own. But what are they fighting for? One thing only, I repeat: security. They want to be free for ever from the danger presented by an aggressive and belligerent neighbour; they want to be sure that for at least a century they will be safe from invasion; they want to spare their children from the horror of war which they have had to endure twice within twenty-five years; they want to be allowed to till their fields and tend their vineyards and devote themselves to the arts of peace. Most intelligent Frenchmen will tell you that France is not essentially an industrial nation, it is a nation above all of peasants and of peasant-farmers; its artificers are little interested in mass-production: they prefer to give their time and attention to articles that require for their manufacture taste and the personal touch. Frenchmen have a deep-seated feeling that what they have to give the world does not compete with the products of the industrial nations. Their most valuable exports are those spiritual values which enlarge the mind and add to the elegance, variety and beauty of life.

There is a bitter feeling among the people of France that the present war has been thrust upon them by the obstinacy of the Allies at the Peace Conference which prevented them from obtaining the safeguards which they were convinced were necessary in order to preclude a resumption of the struggle for existence. Many of them already foresaw in 1920 that, with Germany united as it had never been before, it was inevitable. They realize that the attitude that the Allies adopted was due to their fear of French imperialism. But the French are not an imperialistic nation. I am not now giving my own opinions, but merely repeating what I have heard from the mouths of all manner of persons, persons in all walks of life. It is very generally admitted that the Napoleonic imperialism was a disaster to France. The colonial empire has been won almost by accident, and the sense of it has never entered into the consciousness of the French as our own empire has into that of the English. The feeling is universal, I think, that with a democracy like that of France, imperialism is out of the question; in the fierceness of political animosities a government that showed any tendencies in that direction would stand no chance of subsisting. But the census offers the conclusive argument against the possibility of imperialism. There are forty million people in France and the number is diminishing; unless urgent measures are taken after the war to augment it, in another generation the population will be alarmingly smaller. Jean Giraudoux, who is not only a distinguished official at the Quai d'Orsay, but also an author of great talent, told me recently that he ascribed it to

the wars from which France had suffered during the last century, for before 1870 the natality of the country continued to increase; he suggested that the fear of war and the uncertainty of the future had made people unwilling to burden themselves with large families, and he expressed the opinion that the certainty of an enduring peace would cause a great change in this respect. In the country they told me that the responsibility must be attributed to the Code Napoléon, which obliged the peasant-farmer to divide his land equally between his children, and so, rather than break up his farm, he limited his family to one son who could carry on, with at the most perhaps a second in case the first one died. Others have told me that the cause was to be sought in the selfishness of parents who hesitated to sacrifice their comforts to the needs of numerous children; others again have ascribed it to the dwindling influence of the Catholic Church. But whatever the cause the fact stands that the French are a nation of forty million people and they are confronted by a nation twice as large. "How can we hope to go on holding our own against that vast number," they ask you, "unless this time at last we succeed in making ourselves unassailable?" It is not territories they need—they have not the population to occupy them—it is security. To get it they are prepared for any sacrifice, for any sacrifice of ease and money and for great sacrifice of life, and I think it is as well that the world at large should realize that they are determined not to allow themselves again to be cheated of it. They are not prepared to wage another war in five or ten or fifteen years. They will fight to a finish so that their children may be spared the pain and anguish, the danger of death, which they, many of them for the second time, are now forced to endure. But this also should be known abroad. The French do not believe that they can attain security merely by overthrowing Hitler and his Government. It makes them both anxious and impatient when their papers tell them that many persons in England are of opinion that we have no quarrel with Germany, but only with the company of adventurers that have seized supreme power. The French are not at war with a band of gangsters; they are at war with Germany. They are convinced that if the Nazi leaders were overthrown Germany would in a short time spawn other leaders as ruthless and as dangerous. They have not forgotten Bismarck and William II. One brought an army to invade their land in 1870 and the other in 1914. They look upon Hitler as an embodiment of all the instincts of aggression and the desire of domination of the German people, and these his destruction will do nothing to eradicate. He is a symbol and a rallying point. To eliminate him and think you have gained anything is as absurd as to imagine you have rendered a battleship impotent because you have shot away its colours. No. France is at war, doggedly, resignedly, heroically, not with Hitler and the Nazis only, but with Germany. She is prepared to live at peace with Germany, but only with a Germany powerless to threaten her security.

II

I spent a week with the French Armies in Alsace and Lorraine. In that short time I could not hope to get more than a superficial notion of that great machine. The casemate I visited was well in front of the Maginot Line. The Commandant who showed me over it had the look of a well-fed burgher in an old Dutch picture; he was a thick-set, rubicund, jovial man with a red moustache. He took the same pride in his fortress as the commander of a man-of-war takes in his ship. I asked him how long he could hold out against an attacking force. "If necessary I could stand a siege of six months," he said, and with his eyes twinkling added: "But I should hope they'd come and rescue us before then." I spent an hour and a half seeing one thing and another and then he said to me: "I'm sorry your time is so short, I haven't shown you half yet." When he showed me one of his big machine guns and demonstrated how it could be brought into action, he remarked, he eyes twinkling again: "The one thing a gunner dreams of at night is that he will sight an enemy tank passing within range when there's no superior officer by and he can have a shot at it on his own." I saw the men's quarters. There is not much room and the beds are close together, one row above another; some were lying on their beds reading, others were clustered at the farther end of the dormitory playing cards or chatting. They were all young men, it seemed to me; they had made themselves at home in their narrow space, and you felt that with youth and good humour to help them they were finding life good enough. They knew how much better off they were than the men in the cold and mud of the advanced posts, and though ready to take their place there when the time came, meanwhile enjoyed the warmth, the comfort and the security of their tremendous fortress. They had a neat little canteen where they could buy cigarettes, beer, chocolates and toilet necessaries; they could even buy hair-wash and scent. There were tables in the canteen where they could sit in their leisure hours, drink a glass of beer, listen to the radio and almost think themselves back in the estaminet of their native village.

But one casemate is like another, and when you have read a description of one you have read a description of them all. The war correspondents have said all there is to say about those wonderful and truly awe-inspiring constructions, with their lifts that take you deep underground, their endless passages with their useful trolleys, their electric plant and their air-conditioning, the great stores of food, their armaments and their vast supply of ammunition.

This is not what I have set out to tell. I went to learn how the French soldier fares when he is not in the fighting line, what his relations are with the civil population in the midst of which he is quartered, how he gets on with his comrades in arms and what is the feeling he has towards his officers. I tried to find out how he regards his English allies and what he thinks about the war. With respect to this a general with whom I lunched told me an anecdote. He had been reviewing some troops and on the way back to his car passed a bugler. The bugler saluted smartly, but in the agitation of the moment forgot to bring his feet together; smiling, the general stopped, asked him his name, where he came from and what his occupation was in civil life. When, with some embarrassment, he had answered these questions, the general said: "Well, my boy, and why are you fighting this war?" "*Pour la Patrie*." ("For my country.") The general laughed. "Yes, I know all about that. That's what they taught you to say at school. But why are you fighting this war?" A smile broke on the bugler's honest face and he said: "*Eh, bien, à cause des Boches, j'en ai marre*." ("Well, because I'm fed to the teeth with the Germans.") I thought the anecdote significant for the insight it gave one into the soldier's frame of mind. I would not go so far as to say that it is universal in the French army, but I am sure it is very common. There is no hatred there, no desire to hurt, no irreconcilable antagonism; but impatience—impatience with those Teutons who will not let their neighbours live in the peace they love so well, impatience and the feeling that things have gone too far. Two wars already and three mobilizations in one year; *il faut en finir*. They've asked for it, the Germans, and now they're for it.

But the anecdote seemed to me significant also for the glimpse it gave of the relation that existed between the general and his men. I am sure that, as in all armies, there are in the French army many officers who are stupid, inconsiderate and conceited. I was so fortunate as not to meet any. The French have a peculiar aptitude for expression and they are able to put their thoughts into orderly, lucid and often eloquent language; but putting aside this natural advantage, it seemed to me that the officers I came across were men of unusual intelligence. They were keen soldiers, proud of their profession and absorbed in it; and they gave me the impression of knowing their business with extreme thoroughness. Modern war is a science and these were scientists. But what particularly struck me was their solicitude for their men, their humanity and their reasonableness. In the course of conversation one of the most brilliant generals on the front told me how he had on one occasion shown an order he had just written to a brother general. They had gone through the last war together in the trenches. My general asked his friend: "If you were in command of a company again and received an order like this, what would you think of it?" "I should think it lousy," was the reply. (That is the only decent word I can find for the emphatic and Rabelaisian word actually used.) "So should I, to tell you the truth," said my general, with a laugh, "so I won't send it." I was told another little story, which, trivial as it may be, seemed to me rather touching. Half a dozen men, sent out to do some job, had been splashing about all day in the mud and wet, and when they got back to their quarters were soaked to the skin; the company commander knew they had no change of socks and so distributed his own among them till theirs were dry. I imagine that such a story would make a German officer stare.

A real comradeship exists between officers and men. Discipline is maintained as well as in any other army, but there is in the French army a feeling of solidarity between the various ranks which is truly democratic. I think there is in France less class-consciousness than there is in England, and this in any case makes the relations of men, whatever their social status, more fraternal. Now with the whole nation in arms, men in every rank of society are together, bearing the same discomforts and exposed to the same risks. The rather shabby, ill-fitting uniform of the private soldier may well clothe the body of the smart man about town, the bearer of a great title or a millionaire. Whatever their position in private life, all will carry out with perfect good humour whatever work they are called upon to do. A French reporter told me that he and a number of his colleagues had been taken along the front for a trip that lasted several days, and at the end of it a suggestion was made that the drivers of their cars should be tipped. "Watch your step," said the officer who had charge of them, "some of your drivers could buy you all up a dozen times over."

At the beginning of the last war the French soldier was badly fed, and though later on the food was better, it was never so good as it is now. I made it my business to ask a number of men how they ate, and I found none who had a complaint to make. They begin the morning with a cup of black coffee and a hunk of bread; at ten they have a snack which they call the *casse-croûte*, and this consists of sardines or sausages with another cup of coffee. The midday meal is copious: *hors d'oeuvres*, meat with rice, potatoes or lentils, cheese or stewed fruit to follow, and a quarter of a litre of wine. The evening meal is the same except that soup replaces the *hors d'oeuvres*. The ration of wine has now been

increased to a litre a day. "You should see how the German prisoners stare when they are given our food," they told me. "At first they can't believe it's what we have every day; they think it's a special meal prepared to impress them."

But of course the days are long. Except for the men who are in the front line there are interminable hours in which there is nothing much to do but to kill time. The French suffer from the lack of the organized games which enable the British soldier to occupy his leisure, and the General Staff are hard put to it to find ways of combating the boredom which must inevitably affect their men. During the first months of the war it was possible to employ them to help get in the harvest which the mobilization had so rudely interrupted. Up in the Vosges the fir-trees were heavy with snow and on each side of the road it lay thick, but in the valleys, boys and women were gathering in the beet. A peaceful scene. It was hard, as you drove through that undulating country, with its wide views, to remember that on each side of the Rhine, so near, great armies faced one another. In every field soldiers were helping. You had the feeling as you watched them that they were glad to do it; that for many of them this was the work they had been bred to do and it brought them a sense of relief. You did not need then to be told that the French soldier was fighting not for a frontier, but for his field and his vineyard. But by now the crop has been gathered. Night falls early and there are limits to the number of hours you can play *belotte*. Boredom is one of the enemies that the General Staff has to overcome, for with boredom comes home-sickness and the feeling that when nothing much is going on in the front line it is sad waste of time to stay up in Alsace-Lorraine when your farm, your business or your little shop, needs your attention. Books are wanted, books by the thousand, and radios, with programmes that will cheer and amuse, and without too many patriotic harangues: they do not want their patriotism aroused, these men, it is there deep in their bones; they want to know what is going on, of course, but they want to laugh and sigh at songs, comic and sentimental; and they want entertainments. Heaven knows they deserve all that the kindly and generous can do to help them to pass the cold winter away from their homes in conditions of little comfort.

They'd heard that the British troops were somewhere up the line, and they'd heard that their equipment was better than theirs and their food was as good as in a first-class hotel—bacon and eggs for breakfast and jam for tea. This they said not with envy, but with good humour. If the British were more sumptuously fed than they, well, good luck to them. It must be remembered that the French soldier is above all an infantry man. He heard with sincere distress of the loss of the *Courageous* and the *Royal Oak*. That close upon two thousand officers and men should have lost their lives had a peculiar effect on him. Even though these were lamentable catastrophes, they heartened him, for they brought it home to him that he was being supported by the British navy. But the activities of Great Britain on the sea and in the air do not mean very much to him, any more than do those of his own navy and air force. The arm in which he puts his confidence is the infantry.

I will finish this slight, sadly inadequate sketch of a great subject by a little story I was told by a doctor. Three English planes, flying over the German lines, were attacked and two were brought down in flames; the pilot of the third, though badly wounded, managed to bring it down in France; but when French troops got up to him they found that he was unconscious. They took him to the hospital at Nancy. When he recovered consciousness his first question was about the two men in the planes that had gone up with him. The doctor told him they were dead. The pilot was just a boy. He raised himself up in bed and brought his hand up to his bandaged head in a salute. "Never mind," he said, "it's for England."

III

I visited Strasbourg while I was at the front. It is a city of death. Of its population of 200,000 only such municipal employees remain as are necessary for its essential services and the police, the customs officers and a certain number of soldiers who are there to guard the city and keep it swept and garnished. The wide streets, the narrow lanes with their old houses, are unnaturally neat and clean. They are empty and the silence is uncanny. No trams run, and it startles you when now and then a military car speeds by. The city seems to be waiting for something, and you have the impression that those deserted streets are holding their breath in a terrified foreboding. For a wonder on the day I was there the sun shone brightly; it was high noon, but you had the sinister feeling of a city at dead of night. It was like a city in a fairy-tale

where everyone who dwelt in it was wrapped in a magic sleep. Here and there, in a house or a flat, a window has remained unshuttered, and you cannot resist the notion that someone is living behind that closed window, closed because there is a nip in the air, and that at any moment a face will appear behind it; but you know that not a soul is there. These hundreds and hundreds of houses, street after street, lane after lane, are empty.

Most of the shops have their shutters up, but some had none to put up, and in these the goods for sale remain on display. Women's underwear, silk stockings, hats; they have a strangely forlorn look. At a pastry-cook's little cakes, sweets and what not lie mouldering in the window. There was no time to put anything away when the evacuation took place. Things had to be left just as they were, while the owners huddled a few clothes into a bag, such household linen as they could carry, and fled. They had to leave their cats behind, and now, fed by the soldiers, they wander disconsolate and mew. The pigeons are fed too, flocks of them, and they gather round hungrily when a man comes along with a great hunk of bread and, crumbling it up, throws the pieces into the fluttering crowd.

The Cathedral was rose-red against the pale blue of the wintry sky and here men in khaki were still busy making a protection for the central porch. The stained glass of the windows has been removed to a place of safety and the wind blew bitter through the aisle. The lovely pulpit with its delicate carving had been boarded up. All was cold and grim and bare. It had already the look of the wreck of a church. The city is waiting for destruction. Of that cathedral, which in the Middle Ages was considered one of the marvels of the world, it may be that not one stone will stand upon another. That graceful spire which till modern times was the tallest building in the world may be levelled with the ground. The palace of the Cardinal and Prince Bishop de Rohan, one of the most exquisite buildings in Europe of the first half of the eighteenth century, may be no more than a smouldering ruin.

And as if to call attention to this dreadful possibility, presently, high up, I saw half a dozen planes. They were Allied planes and were, I was told, hunting a Messerschmidt that had been signalled. I watched them till they were lost in a cloud, and walked on. Then on a sudden the sinister note of the siren broke the unearthly silence that wraps the city like a shroud; it rang through the stillness with a merciless intensity, echoing through those empty streets so that it seemed to assail you from every direction; and though I had heard it more than once before, it had in that deserted city an ominous horror. Two or three men started running, and following them I found myself at the police station. There were perhaps a dozen of us, policemen, employees of the municipality and three or four soldiers. They were impatient and exasperated, but facetious. One friendly stranger told me that a German plane came over the city twice a day at such regular hours that they had called it after the popular French paper *Paris Midi* and *Paris Soir*, just as you might say *Midday Standard* and *Evening Standard*.

I lunched with the Mayor, a large, heavy man with an open, friendly face, who spoke French with an Alsatian accent. He loves his city and he looks forward with anguish to what he fears will be its inevitable ruin. He remains there with his wife to take care of it and with courage awaits the catastrophe which may at any moment befall. Trying to reassure him, I suggested that the Germans were unlikely to bomb what they still regarded as a German city. "They shelled it in 1870," he answered. "They ran excursion trains from towns on the other side of the Rhine so that sightseers might see Strasbourg burn." But even should the city be spared the ravages of war its future fills him with misgiving. He reminded me that this was the third time in seventy years that its economic life had been confounded by war. Many of the manufacturers have removed to places where they could set up their factories in safety, and unless peace brought them security for the future they would never return. "It is a dead city," he said. "No," I answered, "only sleeping." He sighed. "That is what I hope, but it is a sleep from which the awakening will be bitter."

A little while later I visited the districts in the Charente to which the refugees from Alsace and Lorraine have been evacuated. There are altogether about half a million of them, but I will only deal with those, amounting to 150,000, who inhabit the region in front of the Maginot Line. This stretches from the Luxembourg border to the Vosges, and it is the richest part of Lorraine. The order for evacuation was issued as soon as it became known that the Germans had entered Poland; and by train, by car, on foot, the refugees set out for the centre, roughly fifty miles at the rear to which they had been instructed to go. Interminable processions passed along the roads, men and women on foot pushing hand-carts and perambulators, whole villages, at their head the Maire and the Curé telling his rosary, carts by the thousand in which were the old people, children and such effects as it had been found possible to bring away. At night, exhausted, they got what rest they could by the wayside. They flung their weary bodies into the ditches.

From these centres they were entrained for the South-west. They were piled into trucks, often open ones, and they

suffered from the heat by day and from the cold at night, from vermin, from hunger and thirst. The trains remained stationary for hours in the open country to allow the passage of troop-trains, and at the stations the halt was so brief that it was impossible for the assistance that had been arranged for to be effective. Those who died on the way, those who fell ill, women in labour, were taken off the train. When finally the refugees reached their destination their state was pitiable.

The department which I visited is a poor one, and its habits and its standards of life are very different from those to which the people of prosperous Lorraine have been accustomed. It has 300,000 inhabitants, and 85,000 refugees have been distributed among its towns and villages. It was not easy for the authorities to find lodging for this great number of persons; from 10,000 to 15,000 arrived every day at Angoulême alone; and it was necessary to put very many in quarters which were in every way unsuitable. The population of the Charente has dwindled by 50,000 since the beginning of the century and there are plenty of empty houses and abandoned cottages, but for the most part they are in a sad state of dilapidation. The refugees set to with a will to make them habitable. They have repaired leaking roofs and mended broken doors. However filthy the hovel was when it was assigned to them—and many of them were deep with the dirt of years—they have made it spotlessly clean; so that now you could eat off the floor. It cannot be easy to keep things clean in an overcrowded room in which two families or more have to live and cook and wash and sleep. Kindly people have provided a good many with small stoves, those who had money bought their own, but in many rooms you see the makeshift stoves they have rigged up for themselves by putting two stones on each side of the hearth and a sheet of iron over them. They have to sleep on straw mattresses, sometimes on the floor, sometimes on deal trestles that they have made themselves. The authorities are providing wooden beds as fast as they can, but there is a shortage of wood, and it takes time to provide beds in war-time for such numbers. There is still a lot of overcrowding. But for all these inconveniences, these real hardships, life still goes on. The general health is good. The children, blue-eyed, with apple-red cheeks, are neat and clean. Though there are no books for their lessons, they go to school, bringing wood with them in the morning to heat the room, and the nuns teach them as best they can in the circumstances. They are bright, nice-mannered children, and for them, indeed, the whole thing is rather a lark. It is wonderful with what spirit these people, snatched away from comfortable homes, bear their lot. They are uncomplaining, and the phrase "*mann muss Geduld haben*" ("one must have patience") is constantly on their lips. I should add here that many of them cannot speak French, especially the older ones, and this makes it more difficult for them to get along comfortably with the natives of the district. It is hard when you have been driven out of your home to be called a boche. But they are a kindly, industrious people and they do what is humanly possible to make the best of things. They understand the difficulties of the situation; conditions have already greatly improved since first they arrived, and this helps them to await a better future with fortitude. They are amazingly cheerful. I went to see an old powder-factory, disused for two hundred years, opposite which was a long row of dwellings where the workmen had their quarters. They have been so long unoccupied that they are in a ruinous state. Here the refugees have been crowded in. They are lucky if there is only one family in a room. The roof leaks and on rainy nights the water splashes down on them. One old girl said to me with a laugh: "Lucky I have an umbrella to sleep under." It was there I saw an elderly wrinkled woman feeding a baby from a bottle. I asked her if it was hers. "No, I'm a widow," she said. "It's a love child, but at the evacuation there was no one to take it, so I did. I couldn't leave it behind, could I?" I went to see some stables standing in the grounds of a chateau; there were six stalls and in each was a straw mattress on the ground, without sheets, and in each stall two persons slept. A tiny room at the side, I suppose the old harness-room, was their living-room. There was an open fireplace with a pot boiling over two sticks. I asked a woman whether there was anyone at the chateau. "No," she said, "the proprietors only come down in the summer." A smile broke on her healthy face. "It would be nice if they let us sleep in the servants' rooms," she said. "To sleep in a stable—well, Our Saviour was born in one." A woman with a sense of humour.

There is a great deal of suffering among these unfortunate people, and some of it could be relieved if the natural selfishness of rich and well-to-do householders were more firmly dealt with. But it is useless to draw too harrowing a picture of conditions which war unhappily makes inevitable. There are mitigations to their state. The country is pretty and undulating, truly rural, and it is well wooded; the landlords allow them to take all the wood in reason that they want, so that at least they can keep warm. They are anxious to work, but it is not easy to find anything to do. Still, work is gradually being secured for them, on the land or in factories, with adequate wages. The unemployed receive from the State ten francs a day for each adult and six francs for each child under thirteen. They have large families, and two or three families often pool their resources, so that their meals are good and copious. I saw some at their dinners, others I saw preparing them, and what they were going to eat was very appetizing. My mouth watered at the sight of a *Pfannkuchen* which a sturdy housewife had just set before her eager children. They are people of a religious turn of

mind and they find solace in the services they attend not only on Sundays but on weekdays; their priests are there, full of kindness and energy, to console, cheer and encourage them. With time their housing will be improved. For the rest, generous people can do much to alleviate their hard lot. They left in the middle of summer, thinking they would not be gone long, for they were convinced that this was one more bluff of the Germans and that war would not be declared, so they came away without any warm clothes or any means of coping with the cold winter. Now they need stoves, both to keep warm and to cook, blankets, heavy clothes for cold weather, babies' clothes, and shoes. Shoes especially, since for lack of them many are going about the muddy farm-yards, the country roads, in felt slippers. They do not ask for charity, but they are in sore need. If any persons who read these pages are moved to do something for these poor folk, their gifts will be gratefully received by the Centre Social Mosellan, Cognac, Charente. It would be an encouragement to these brave, energetic and determined people to think they had friends in England and in America who sympathized with them in their unmerited distress. I have said that they are people of a deeply religious spirit. Few of them in the hurry of departure, gathering together the essential things they could not afford to do without, forgot to bring with them their crucifix. I remember one old woman with a red, lined face and a shock of white hair cut short. She talked to me of the cottage she had left in Lorraine. She must have been over seventy, but she was strong and active still. She had been a working woman all her life and had borne many children. The tears streamed down her cheeks as she told me it was hard at her age to have to leave the little house in her native village. There was a crucifix standing on the table, the figure of Christ in silver on an ebony cross. Suddenly she snatched it up and pressed it to her heart. Her face was lit up as though a ray of sunshine had fallen on it, and with a sob in which, mingled with her pain, was pride and hope, in a strong, full voice she cried out: "Es lebe Lothringen." ("Long Live Lorraine.") They are fine, brave people, and they deserve our help. I nearly forgot to say how glad the children would be if they could be sent some toys.

IV

When I went to see Monsieur Dautry to thank him for enabling me to visit the munition factories, I ventured to ask him whether he thought flesh and blood could stand the long hours of labour, day after day, which he was demanding of the workers. He told me that there was no help for it; this was a war of material to an unprecedented extent, and material must be produced at whatever cost. He said that he was well aware that men could not be expected indefinitely to continue to work with such intensity, but in the tragic emergency he felt that he could ask them without hurt to themselves to persevere for a few months; then he added; "Tell your friends in England that for every 100,000 men they send over, 100,000 men now at the front can be released to work in my factories. That will give me 800,000 more hours of work a week, and that means an hour's work less a day for 800,000 men."

But first I must tell you who Monsieur Dautry is. He is Minister of Armaments. He is not a politician, but an engineer and a great organizer. It was he who reduced to order the confusion of the French State railways, and characteristic stories are told of his efficiency, his indefatigability and his determination. He is a small man, with a sallow face and decided features, a thick head of greying hair and an eye of piercing brightness. He gives you an impression of enormous energy and you cannot talk to him for ten minutes without realizing that here is a man with a quick, logical brain, who has the gift of summing up a situation so rapidly that it looks as though the process were intuitive, who then without hesitation decides upon a course of action, and who has the individuality to enforce its performance. He is untiring; and himself, it appears, able to do without sleep or rest, he expects an equal activity from his fellow-workers; but such is the enthusiasm with which his personality inspires them, such is the loyalty to himself which his force of character has aroused in them, that they, his fellow-workers, happy and proud to be associated with him, find it possible to fulfil his demands. He is at his office from early in the morning till late at night, and then often goes to some factory or other to see how the work is proceeding and to talk to the men on the night-shift. On the second occasion on which I saw him he mentioned casually that he had been up all the three preceding nights, but he was as alert, his mind was as nimble, as though he had slept soundly through all three of them. It was late one evening that they rang Monsieur Dautry up from the Bureau des Informations to ask him if he would grant me the necessary facilities; he gave me an appointment for the following morning at nine o'clock, and when I presented myself at the Ministry he had already prepared for me a programme, which he had himself made out for me during the night, and which would enable me to visit a sufficient number of factories to get an impression of the effort France was making to supply the troops with

all the material needed for the prosecution of the war. I felt bound to tell him that of all the subjects of which I know nothing there was none of which I was more ignorant than of machinery. He said: "I will have you accompanied by two engineers, a military and a naval one, and they will explain to you everything you cannot understand." I had to my shame to tell him then that in all probability I should not be able to understand their explanations. Nor did I; so the reader must not expect me to give him any details of the manufacture of the latest guns nor to describe to him the newest models of armoured cars. I saw them make powder and explosives; I saw them make planes, and the guns for them; anti-aircraft guns, armoured cars, cannon. When I was on the front I would have said that the whole nation is under arms, but after a week spent in visiting the armament works I was almost inclined to say that the whole country is one huge factory.

I will speak first of three factories I visited on the front. One was a sugar factory almost on the banks of the Rhine and so near the advanced posts of the enemy that it was well within range of a big machine-gun; but except that the women were evacuated, work was proceeding as quietly as in peace-time. The general in command of the troops in that region was eager to maintain the economic life of the country, and my visit chanced to come aptly because, owing to the lack of raw material, the factory was to close next day. Hardly more than half the beet crop had been gathered, and what remained could not be got in because the horses necessary for cartage had been requisitioned. We learnt that 300 horses were needed for six weeks to collect the rest of the crop, and these were immediately promised. I saw also a factory which in peace-time produces woollen goods and under-linen, but now is busily turning out shirts, socks and pull-overs for the troops. It is within range of a not very heavy gun. I think at least 300 women must have been occupied there, but the only indication I could discover that they felt themselves to be working under peculiar conditions was that the permanent wave of a good many seemed to be wearing a trifle thin. I went to a foundry which is, strange as it may seem, in front of the Maginot Line. It could of course be easily bombed by the Germans, but they have so far left it alone for fear, presumably, of the reprisals which would immediately follow. Still, the directors are taking precautions; the women and children have been evacuated; shelters have been built in case of air-raids; and arrangements have been made to remove essential parts, should the Germans advance, so that it would take them the better part of a year to get the factory working again. The steel manufactured is shipped away every night, so that they would find at best only the produce of one day's work. I think what most struck me in those enormous works, employing now close on 2000 men, was the sense of emptiness. In a vast shed where work was going on at full blast there was only a handful of men, and they seemed to be there merely to supervise the almost human, the strangely purposeful, activity of the machines which pressed and cut and carried the huge ingots of red-hot steel.

It was a very different impression I got when I visited various factories in the neighbourhood of Paris, where in one I saw the manufacture of armoured cars, in another of shells, in a third of aeroplane guns; in these and others which it would be tedious to enumerate, the crowded workers, the serried rows of machines, gave one the feeling of an intense, a fierce but regulated animation. I cannot attempt to describe the wonderful things I saw; I will only mention a few details that peculiarly interested me. One thing that struck me was the pains that are taken to make the powerful and yet wonderfully manageable tank as spick and span as a private car. Every part is quite exquisitely finished. The machines that are used for the manufacture of all these lethal weapons are miracles of ingenuity. They work automatically, so that the man in charge has little more to do than to keep a watchful eye. They have the elegance of perfect adaptation to their use. I could quite understand that the workman took pride in, even feel in love with, this beautiful instrument, so spruce and clean, that could do such delicate and accurate work. Machines are arriving from America with regularity. I saw one huge hall where in February last there was but one automatic machine and where now there are 150. I wish I could give the reader some impression of the immense complication of the labour that goes to produce almost everything that is needed to kill men with. I have seldom seen a more elegant instrument than an aeroplane gun. It was staggering to me to learn that one part, not more than a foot long, went through 109 hands before it was ready, and another part, three inches long, went through 50. Though it takes no more than ten minutes of actual time to make a machine-gun shell, its fabrication, so many are the processes necessary, so many hands must it pass through, requires a week for its completion. There is a multitude of machines, each doing its delicate little job, a string of women, each occupied on a different operation that must be done by hand. The fuse, that elaborate and ingenious part so exquisitely devised, needing such accurate care, is as beautifully turned out as a jewel.

This is the work of miniaturists. It is a very different impression you get when you visit the Government factories where they make heavy guns and big shells. The factory is spacious, and the machines needed to bore those huge steel rods, to manufacture those tremendous carriages, are so enormous that you have none of the crowded effect of other factories. The din is not so terrific, and although work is incessant, going on night and day, day after day for seven days a

week, there is an odd effect of dignified leisure. Everything is on a gigantic scale. These monsters, looking ridiculously like the toy guns made for children, take six months to make, and in the factory I saw they produced two a week.

I spent one morning at a powder-factory. It is situated in a wood, nearly 400 acres in extent, which must be charming in spring and summer. The factory was founded in 1870; it was smaller then, and the director rode and shot in those pleasant woods. He has been ousted now, and buildings are to be seen among the trees wherever you look; they are of small size for the most part, and separated from one another, so that should an accident occur in one it would not bring disaster to its neighbour. For the moment you enter you are made aware that danger is close; at the gateway your matches and lighter are taken from you; and so that you may be preserved from temptation you are asked to give up your cigarettes. The workmen wear wooden sabots in case a nail in a leather sole should strike a spark on the concrete floor. They wear black overalls which are fire-proofed, and this uniform sombreness gives them a kind of mystery. The director who showed me round told me that his immediate predecessor was the victim of an explosion. Not a trace of him, not even a trouser button, was ever found; he simply disappeared. I saw the whole process of manufacture from the white cotton flock saturated with ether and alcohol that looks so innocent, to the final operation which is so dangerous that only two men are allowed together into the shed where it is performed, and there is a trench full of water within a few feet of the doors, so that if there is a fire they should immediately plunge in. But in all the buildings in which the complicated business is transacted there are ingenious automatic devices for flooding in case some of the material catches fire. In another factory I saw, where they made explosives, the last part of the process takes place in little cubicles so made that the roof and front will blow out if there is an explosion, and each man works alone, so that he alone may be killed. Grim! And yet so true is it that familiarity breeds contempt, that these workmen—and there are 12,000 of them at the powder-factory—go about their business with as little concern as the women I had seen at the front making shirts and sweaters.

My visits to these various factories had taken me north, east and south in France; I had seen a great deal that was strange to me, and to make head or tail of all this I should have had to be an expert in half a dozen professions; but one thing I could not help growing conscious of, and that is the tremendous effort the country is making and the wonderful spirit that possesses the men and women who are engaged in it. Monsieur Dautry, amazing organizer as he is, could not have kept this gigantic machine going with such efficiency except for the willing collaboration of this army of workmen, and it is of them I wish to say a final word. They have cheerfully accepted the much longer hours of work which the needs of the moment have made essential. The day-shifts work eleven hours, the night-shifts ten, and in many factories they work seven days a week. They earn good money. A proportion of their wages is withheld for the benefit of the poor families of mobilized men; but besides that, once a month each workman makes a voluntary contribution of ten francs, which is sent as a gift to the mobilized workers who in peace-time are engaged in the factory. They were wonderfully alert, with keen faces and intelligent eyes. I could not but be struck by the pride each workman seemed to take in his particular job. He would explain to me, the most ignorant of persons, with technical detail, points that I could only pretend to understand. Not only foremen, but even ordinary workmen, explained almost with eloquence the mechanism of the complicated instrument they dealt with. They were professional men every bit as much as lawyers or doctors. The heartening impression I brought away with me was that they are prepared to endure as long as necessary the interminable hours of arduous toil which are demanded of them, for they are aware that this effort which they are making is for the security of their country and the welfare of their children. One after another they repeated the phrase to me which Mr. Chamberlain has made famous: *Il faut en finir*.

V

In many provincial towns in France there is a shop called Aux Dames de France. I have never ventured inside, but I suppose these are shops where women can buy at a moderate price whatever they need to clothe their slender or opulent shapes; there are generally trestles on the pavement, and here bargains are displayed: ribbands, remnants, stockings, bust-bodices, which you see women—tempted, doubtful or merely curious—interminably turning over and fingering, while a grim-faced female in a smock watches them with a beady eye. It is Aux Dames de France that the following pages are dedicated.

I think that no one who has not seen them at work can have a notion how great is the effort that the women of France have been making since the war broke out and how much it is due to them that the economic life of the country has been maintained. When war broke out the harvest was still in progress. Between four and five million men were mobilized. Women took their places. They set out at once to gather the beet and to pick the grapes; you saw them working in every field and you saw them driving the heavily laden carts along the roads. Up at the front, busy with their pressing toil, they hardly troubled to give a passing glance to the planes, enemy planes for all they knew, that flew over them.

A vast number of shops had to close because the owners were called up, but in many, the smaller ones especially, their wives took over and kept the business going. Somehow or other they managed to do the men's work and find time besides to look after the home, take care of the children and cook the dinner. In the districts to which the evacuees have been sent—for the women of Alsace and Lorraine, though many of them speak hardly a word of French, are women of France too—they went to work to render their wretched lodgings habitable. They scrubbed the floors and the stairs, cooked meals on makeshift stoves, washed and mended; and by their courage and good humour preserved the decencies and beauty of family life. Of all the ladies of France it is to the women of Alsace and Lorraine, whose unconquerable spirit has surmounted the difficulties of an unbelievably difficult situation, that most praise is perhaps due. No shipwrecked mariners cast away on a desert island could have given evidence of a more practical inventiveness so to deal with the circumstances as in a little while to reduce confusion to order and restore to life something of a pattern.

Thousands of women are working in factories. In most of them, I think, the wife was offered the job of her mobilized husband, and it is strange to see them, middle-aged women of determined aspect, the mothers of families, young women, evidently not long married, with painted lips and a permanent wave, tending an automatic machine in the crowded din of an armament works. Many of them had never before worked in a factory, but I was told by various directors that they got into the way of it very quickly; I was not surprised, for after what I have seen I am ready to believe that the French woman can do anything she has a mind to. But they have their homes to look after and their children to care for; by a wise decree arrangements have been made to enable them in some measure to do this. In some factories they only work two weeks out of three, in others they are given every third day off, in either case with full pay, so that they should not lose touch with what, after all, are their essential interests, and so that their children should run as little chance as possible of neglect. But it is grim to see this multitude of women occupied in making all manner of things to kill and maim the husbands and brothers of other women. In some work—the delicate and accurate work, for instance, that has to be put into the making of a fuse—they are better than men. It is grim to see them so neatly painting and varnishing the cases of big shells. It is grim to see rows and rows of them making the bags in which powder is to be poured, and when they are filled tying them up into neat parcels or packing them into metal cylinders.

I have dwelt so far on the work that is being done by the women of France in the more modest ranks of society, but it must not be thought that the others have remained idle. In France, as in England, alas! there are still women who look upon the war as an unparalleled nuisance because it interferes with the comfort and amusement of their lives. There are women who want to give parties and go to them and who are exasperated because the mobilization of men-servants renders it difficult to get perfect service and because with a chauffeur at the front it is awkward to get about. There are women who still play bridge half the day and flatter themselves they are doing something for the country when they bring their knitting to the bridge-table and set their maids to making pull-overs. But there are many more who have given their money and their time to the numerous associations that have been instituted to cope with the manifold difficulties of the moment. There are many who have set themselves, alone and obscure, to alleviate the distress, financial and moral, of their neighbours. The Red Cross has founded 150 auxiliary hospitals, with nearly 20,000 beds, and has placed thousands of adequately trained nurses at the disposal of the authorities. The evacuation of half a million people from Alsace and Lorraine was a distressing necessity, and its attendant hardships would have been scarcely tolerable without the willing aid given by the Girl Guides. They helped families to pack such few things as they could take with them, and on train journeys that might well last three or four days they exerted themselves to comfort those frightened and unhappy people, herded sometimes in cattle-trucks, and mitigate their discomforts. Day and night the Girl Guides were at the wayside stations to give what refreshment and help was possible to the refugees. They met them in Paris, fed them, encouraged them and convoyed them across the city to the station from which they were to entrain for their destination. There again the Girl Guides met them, interpreted for them, acted as intermediaries between them and the population which was obliged, somewhat unwillingly, to receive them, distributed clothes among them, provided them with books, and, in short, did everything that human kindness could do to ease the tragic lot of these strangers in a land strange to them.

But this is only a part of the activities of the women of France; I should never end if I attempted to describe them

all. Among the many societies engaged in admirable and useful work I will name only L'Union des Femmes de France. It sends parcels to the soldiers and has enrolled a host of women and girls to make jumpers, socks and scarves for the soldiers; but besides this, it has embarked upon two undertakings, one of which shows, to my mind, a touching thoughtfulness, and of which the other peculiarly interests me as a professional writer. Men on leave, or transferred from one post to another, often arrive at a station where they have to spend the best part of the night before their train starts. They are tired and hungry, maybe wet through, and they have perhaps little money in their pockets. L'Union des Femmes de France offers them shelter. A woman opens a door and invites the weary soldier to come in. He finds a warm room, with beds in it, rugs to cover him and hot coffee. There are paper and pencils on a table so that he can write to his family or his girl, and the fact that in one station alone from 250 to 300 letters are written every night shows that he is glad of the opportunity. There is a lavatory where he can wash his feet and put on a clean pair of socks; his own are washed and mended and passed on to another man. He gets a good sleep, and a kindly woman wakes him when his train is due. He leaves rested not only in body, but in spirit.

But a great change has come over the French soldier since 1914; then attack followed attack, and the man in the trenches had to be constantly on the alert. In such leisure as he had he was contented to smoke his pipe and play a game of cards. But since then education has spread, inexpensive books, magazines and innumerable papers have aroused in men who had never read before the desire to do so. Books now are a need almost as urgent as the chocolate, sausages and sardines which the soldier likes best to find in his parcel. For four months now he has had to stand the hardest possible trial to one of his ardent temper: he has had to wait; and his spirit, craving for occupation, demands reading matter. L'Union des Femmes de France issued an appeal for this, and it is heartening to know that the response has been great. One old lady brought in a lot of picture-papers carefully wrapped up in tissue paper, one young man brought his text-books so that a student under arms might continue his studies, an elderly gentleman offered his whole library. The books are sorted, those that are obviously unsuitable are withheld, and the rest are sent to the front to give a soldier a few hours of happy forgetfulness, to give him perhaps some new thought to ponder over and to bring into his monotonous life a little romance or a little laughter. But more books are needed, and anyone who has French books he has read (and, let us admit it, few books are worth reading twice) might do worse than send them to: Le Livre du Combattant, 104 Avenue des Champs Elysées, Paris.

I said just now that I believed that there was little French women could not do if they had a mind to, and the variety of tasks they have undertaken since war was declared is truly amazing. As is well known, at its outbreak steps were taken to remove to places of safety the innumerable treasures of art which France possesses. Among the most important of these is the stained glass in the cathedrals and churches. Rouen has many lovely windows, and an architect was commissioned to do the necessary work, but he had barely begun when he and his skilled workmen were called up. His wife immediately took his place. Since to take down stained glass is a delicate business which requires technical knowledge and she had to make do with what labour she could get, she was obliged to give it her unceasing attention. And no time could be lost. From early morning till the failing light made further work impossible she stayed up in the scaffolding, watching and directing, and at last succeeded in putting that precious glass in safety. And here is a little story which might well serve as the theme for a success novel. There is a factory where not only most of the employees, but also the owner, were young; they were called up and the factory closed down. But the owner's secretary, whom I know only as Mademoiselle B., could not bear to think that these busy works should stay idle and its many women employees be thrown out of a job; so, with feminine astuteness, she pulled all the strings she could to get the factory requisitioned by the State, by which means work for National Defence could be secured. She was thus able to keep her women workers and, because what the factory produces is of essential service, get such men as were necessary. The machines were set going again and soon work was in full swing. But Mademoiselle B. is evidently a young woman of determination, for during the luncheon hour—lunch being served at a canteen—she has set the women to knit scarves, socks and sweaters for the employees of the factory who are mobilized. There is a fund to which each worker contributes a few sous so that little luxuries may be added to the parcels. Mademoiselle B. must be a person of intelligence, energy and initiative; and of course the end of the story should be orange blossom and marriage bells; but whether she should marry the owner of the factory or a young son of toil who has returned from the front with the Croix de Guerre, the reader must decide for himself.

But there is an excitement in running a factory and a thrill in saving a precious work of art from destruction. There are vast numbers of women in France who are quietly doing obscure and humble tasks of which no one will ever hear. There was a baker in the Poitou who made bread for the whole district, and his wife with her handcart delivered it in the

surrounding hamlets. He was called up, and since he was the only baker in the neighbourhood, it would have been a poor look-out for everyone if the wife he had left behind had not set to work to make and bake the bread herself at night and deliver it as usual by day. And in Auvergne there is a lady living in an old chateau to which people round about have been accustomed for generations to come for help in their troubles. It is a poor part of the country, with scattered hamlets and lonely farms. The men are gone and the women are left to shoulder burdens which only their courage prevents from being intolerable. This lady has revived the old custom of sewing bees. Those who do not live too far away she gathers together of an evening so that they may work together in a warm and cosy room, while the children play or learn their lessons, and since almost she alone knows how to read, she reads the paper to them; and they chat together, about their men at the front and the peace they long for and their hope that peace will be a good peace so that there may be no danger that their children when they are grown up will have to go to war again. But, since some of the hamlets are distant, this lady has arranged similar gatherings in them, and in the winter night, by snow and wind, she goes out to hearten and cheer those poor, humble, hard-worked women, for they too, she knows, are working for their country.

I think I have said enough to show how gallantly the ladies of France are taking their share in the tragic struggle and with what valiance, what energy, what intelligence they are coping with the unimaginable difficulties of the situation. With wonderful patience, with their sense of affairs and with fortitude, they are in a large part maintaining the prosperity of the country. In rural districts they are looking after the horses and cattle that have not been requisitioned and getting the fruitful soil ready for next year's harvest; in the towns they are keeping the shops open and running their men's business. Women are taking over the practice of the doctors who have been mobilized. In the schools women teachers have taken over the work of men teachers and uncomplainingly added it to their own. In short, they are all doing with energy, good sense and patriotism whatever wants doing.

I cannot finish without mentioning a circumstance which has not a little excited my curiosity. Since the beginning of the war the hair of many of the ladies in France has been growing rapidly darker at the roots, but whether this is due to the anxiety natural to the times, or to some more obscure cause, I am not competent to say. I will, however, hazard the surmise that if the war continues much longer there will be few blondes in France for gentlemen to prefer.

VI

The French people are justly proud of their army. It is well armed, well led and the spirit of the men is as admirable as it has always been. The pages of history are rich with the story of its exploits, and the great victories it has won are of imperishable memory. I suppose every Frenchman could roll you off a long list of its famous generals, from Turenne and Condé, Napoleon and his marshals to Joffre, Gallieni and Foch; but I doubt whether one in a hundred could give you the name of any admiral of his country's fleet but Suffren, and I am not sure that even he could tell you why exactly this great sailor has achieved renown. For the French have never taken the same interest nor taken the same pride in their navy. Governments have always been parsimonious in the supplies they granted it. It needed the determination of M. Leygues, Minister of Marine, inspired by the enthusiasm of a young officer who is now Admiral Darlan, Commander in Chief, to induce the reluctant deputies to vote at last sufficient funds to reorganize the French navy and thus in due course bring it to its present high state of efficiency. The French navy does not advertise its accomplishments, it goes about its job modestly and discreetly, with the result that the public, both in France and in England, has little notion either of its strength or of the splendid work it has been doing since war broke out. By the end of November the French navy had sunk at least ten German submarines and had seized 200,000 tons of German goods; and since then it has further achievements to its credit. It has made the Mediterranean as safe as the Lake of Lucerne. It has protected the great Atlantic ports in France and Morocco and has transported vast numbers of troops to and from French Colonies. It has convoyed the British troopships on the latter part of their passage of the Channel till their arrival in French harbours.

But to give an account anything like adequate of the French navy at the present moment I should have to be an expert in naval matters. My object in this article is very modest. I was fortunate enough to be invited to spend a little time in a heavy cruiser and in a torpedo boat and go to sea with them while they carried out certain routine exercises. Hoping to interest the reader, I will tell him what I saw. The first difficulty that confronts the stranger in a French man-of-war is the

mode of address. In the army you address a general as *mon general*, a major and a captain as *mon commandant* and *mon capitaine*, respectively; but in the navy you do nothing of the sort: you say, *oui, amiral*, to an admiral, and you address captains, commanders and lieutenant-commanders as *Commandant*; other officers you address by their names. On meeting for the first time in the day, a junior officer salutes his superior; they shake hands and exchange a few words. The junior says: "*Mes respects, Commandant*," while the senior replies: "*Comment allez-vous?*" or "*Ca va bien?*" It would be foolish to make any definite statements on the casual observations I was able to gather on so short a visit; I received the impression that the officers' relations with one another were cordial and polite without being intimate. One of the great differences between the English and the French is the closeness of the family tie. With the Englishman it binds him loosely, but with the Frenchman the family is the centre, the mainstay and the justification of his life. It was very evident that the commander was proud of his ship, as a racing motorist might be proud of the car that had served him well, but it was not his home; his home was the house at Brest or Toulon where his wife and children waited for him. And perhaps it is natural that the naval officer of to-day, a highly trained specialist, should look upon the modern battleship as an instrument under his hand, a delicate, powerful but inanimate instrument, rather than with the warm feeling with which the sea captain of old looked upon his sailing-vessel. There are doubtless many thousand Englishmen who know nothing of the sea, just as there are many thousand Frenchmen who know nothing of the soil, yet the sea has for the English the same deeply spiritual significance that the soil has for the French, so that the British officer can still look upon the great and complicated machine which is a battleship as his home, and his messmates of the wardroom as his family. I have a notion that his French colleague chooses the sea for his profession, loving it certainly, but as other men choose a career in the city, and when he leaves his ship does so as they would leave their office. He enjoys the opportunities the treacheries of the element give him for the exercise of his will and intelligence, but I think he keeps the tenderness of his emotion for the countryside of his birthplace. It is a difference of temperament, and in no way impairs his efficiency. The officers I was fortunate enough to meet appeared to me clever, keen and able. They worked so hard that I could not believe the French navy would ever produce another Loti. In the French navy promotion is automatic up to the rank of commander; after that it is by merit; and I think it will be hard in future for a naval officer, obliged to concentrate on his ceaseless duties, to attain high rank and to achieve as well the distinction as a novelist which was won by the author of *Pêcheurs d'Islande*. I seemed to discern that, though discipline was perfect, there was the same pleasantly democratic feeling in the French navy as I had found in the French army. Orders are given in a less peremptory fashion than in our own ships. The sailor when he is speaking to an officer does not say *monsieur* to him, but addresses him by his rank. Officers and men smoke where and when they please on board, during working hours and out of them. I had a feeling that there existed between officers and men not only confidence, but a sort of quiet friendliness. The French soldier is a conscript, but he is a man, often of education, and he is an intelligent man; and he carries out an order better if he knows the meaning of it; he likes to know what he is up to and likes to be treated as a rational being. I should be inclined to say that compared with a man in the British navy he is rather slovenly and untidy, and again from that standpoint, I dare say a good deal is done in a rather happy-go-lucky fashion, but the fact remains that things are done and done well. These are minor details; essentially sailors are the same in every country and the brotherhood of the sea unites them. I happened to be in a torpedo boat when the news came in of the battle between the *Rawalpindi* and the *Deutschland*. Officers and men exulted in the British ship's heroic struggle as frankly as if it had been a ship of their own that had endured for so many hours the unequal contest. Each man seemed to take a personal pride in the magnificent exploit. Shortly before, they had heard of the good fortune the *Sirocco* had had in sinking two submarines in three days. "What a bit of luck!" said the commander of my torpedo boat; "but it's enough, she must leave a few for the rest of us." He would have been superhuman if he had not felt a trace of envy for the commander who, with all the odds of the sea against him, had run across the submarines, but it was offset by a great good will.

I must not forget that in a French ship the food is extremely good. Lunch is at noon, and is a substantial and well-cooked meal. I could not have eaten better in a first-class restaurant, and a patriotic bias shall not prevent me from saying that lunch in a French torpedo boat is a vastly more palatable meal than any I have eaten in an admiral's flagship in the British navy. Dinner, served according to circumstances between seven and eight, is slighter, but well cooked, and the quality of the food is as good. Messing is paid for by the Government, and this covers all drinks, so that there is no mess bill except for cigarettes. I am told that in some ships bridge in normal circumstances is played after dinner, but officers use the mess little except for meals. As a rule they turn in early.

I will now relate what I saw when I went to sea first in a heavy cruiser, then in a torpedo boat. They were just the ordinary exercises of the fleet, but they may be interesting to someone who, like myself, till then had never seen them. It was splendid to steam out of harbour in that great ship, and we must have made an imposing procession as we set forth,

with two aeroplanes flying over us, preceded by a torpedo boat, the mine dredger sweeping behind it, and escorted by two other torpedo boats. We passed through the channel in the mine-fields, and when we reached the appointed spot for the gunnery practice we were to do, the torpedo boats left us. It was strangely uncanny to me to see the stealthy ease with which the heavy guns slewed round in their great steel turrets. They were like huge primeval monsters lurking in their caves for their prey. With powerful glasses one could see quite well the great fountain of water that was thrown up when a shell fell a trifle short or a trifle wide of its mark and the staggering of the target when there was a direct hit. The gunnery was wonderfully accurate. We spent the day in various exercises, we were attacked by a flotilla of torpedo boats, and we practised with anti-aircraft machine-guns. It was beautiful to see the shells speed through the air like a flight of red-hot hornets. Then at night, returning, we fired again at the target at which we had practised in the morning. In the silence and darkness the sound was terrific and awe-inspiring. The lighting shells were wonderfully pretty as they shot through the night, ricocheting when they struck the water and bouncing on the surface like great balls of fire.

In the torpedo boat aboard which I was afterwards taken we were set first of all to act as a target to a shore battery. The guns aimed at us, but their direction was deflected so that the shells fell 600 metres to the right of us. Except for this, their first shell would have sent us to the bottom. Nineteen shots were fired, and of these five were direct hits and two others fell so close that we should have been badly damaged. If it had been real warfare not many of that crew would ever have seen their homes again. Later in the day we were attacked by a flotilla of torpedo boats, but, owing to a mishap to one of these, only a few torpedoes were fired, and we were instructed to accompany the disabled ship back to harbour. We arrived at dead of night, the boom was opened and we steamed slowly in to attach ourselves to the buoy of which the number had been wirelessed to us. The harbour was in pitch darkness, one could just discern the shapes of ships at anchor, and to find the particular buoy we wanted was a long and ticklish job. Next morning we set out again to escort to harbour the cruiser on which I had been before. When we found her we put out our dredger and steamed ahead of her, thus minimizing the danger of her striking a mine, which the smaller torpedo boat might miss, and, if it did not, would prove a less serious loss.

It was about four in the afternoon when the cruiser dismissed us, and then we put on steam to join a flotilla which was already on the way out to sea. They were waiting for us twenty miles away. We were to find and attack a cruiser which had been ordered to go from a certain point on the mainland to a certain island, a distance of 120 miles. By the rules of the game the cruiser had to stick to her course, but, once sighted, could do whatever she chose to get away. The light was failing when we came up with the flotilla. It looked imposing and powerful sitting there in the empty sea. It consisted of two light cruisers, and after we joined it of six torpedo boats. A place had been left for us, and when we had taken it we set out. The two cruisers had the central position, while the torpedo boats flanked them; the formation had the shape of a cock-eyed diamond on a playing-card. The distance we kept from one another was about 1000 metres, but when we reached the appointed spot from which we were to start our search we separated, and then I think there was about 4000 to 5000 metres from ship to ship. Night had fallen now, a heavy sea was running and with all our speed on we were rolling a good deal. I was glad, standing on the bridge, to have a rail to cling to. "This is nothing," the commander told me: "sometimes she rolls so that when you're hanging on to that rail your feet are swept away from under you."

We tore on through the night, with all lights out, trying through our glasses to get a glimpse of the cruiser we were looking for. Nothing could be seen of the rest of our flotilla. I had a sudden realization of the immense loneliness of the sea and of its vastness. It needs an experience like that to make you feel how immense it is, and then you cannot wonder that with dozens of ships looking for her, a raider may escape detection. My commander was a big, vigorous, energetic man, and now as he stood on the bridge his spirits rose with the excitement of the chase. His face was set and even in the darkness you could see the shining of his eyes. His whole body was taut. "Ah, if it were only the real thing," he cried, "and if it were an enemy cruiser we were after!" The moon rose and he looked at it with misgiving. He feared that it would betray us and so give the cruiser a chance to escape. We pounded on into the empty night and heavy seas swept over our bows. Then a wireless from one of the torpedo boats told us that the cruiser had been sighted; we changed our course and suddenly there was a cry from a dozen throats. The moon was favourable and showed us a vague black mass faintly silhouetted against the sky. Although it was only make-believe, it was a thrilling moment. The commander gave an order, we changed our course again to get into position; a sudden crash of thunder and we had fired our torpedoes. "D'you think you got her?" I asked. "I don't know, we shall hear to-morrow." Then from the flagship they wirelessed to us that the rest of the flotilla were taking on the pursuit, so with one torpedo boat ahead of us and another astern we started back for harbour. The moon now was hidden in cloud, and we pounded through the heavy sea in pitch darkness. My

unaccustomed eyes could see nothing, but the officers could make out the boat ahead of us, and we followed her between the islands. After the excitement there was a faint sensation of being let down, and the journey home seemed very long. The cold was bitter, but as we were approaching land we saw a dark mass, a ship we did not know. Instantly everyone was on the alert; we turned our search-light on her, messages flickered to and fro, and we discovered, somewhat to my commander's disappointment, I think, that she was a French auxiliary cruiser setting out on a legitimate errand. At last we crept into harbour. We were to tie up at a quay where a whole line of torpedo boats were moored, in a space between two, and the commander took his ship of 3000 tons in as neatly and as delicately to its appointed berth as though it were a small roadster that he was laying along the crowded kerb in an opening left by a departing car. I was taken off in a launch and landed at another quay from which I could get into the town. I was sorry to say good-bye to my charming and hospitable host. It was the small hours of the morning and it was hard to find the way in the inky blackness through those silent, empty streets. Not a soul was to be seen. It might have been an evacuated city.

VII

There is a cathedral in France in the transept of which, on the wall, is a memorial tablet. In the centre are the arms of Great Britain, and surrounding them those of India, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and Newfoundland; and the inscription runs: "To the Glory of God and to the Memory of One Million Dead of the British Empire who fell in the Great War, 1914-1918, and of whom the greater part rest in France." These are simple and solemn words, and they give the lie to the gibes of German propaganda that the British are prepared to fight to the last drop of French blood.

The cathedral was utterly destroyed by the Germans in the last war, but it has been built anew with taste and discretion; its lines are pure and it has a fine austerity. It is a handsome and dignified edifice and needs now only a century or two, which will soften the sharpness of its outlines and give mellowness to its honey-coloured stone, to acquire the shattering tenderness of beauty. But who can tell whether time will have the chance to paint it with its lovely patina? The stained glass has been taken out of the windows and the high altar is protected by sandbags, for though there is now no possibility that the German guns will again bombard it, there is still the danger of attack from the air, and none can be sure that this noble structure, so recently completed, will not once more be brought to ruin. The bishop's palace was destroyed too, and it was at the door of a very new, spick-and-span building that I rang the bell to keep the appointment the bishop had made with me. I was ushered into a smallish room with an ugly flowered paper, a suite of stiff furniture and portraits of ecclesiastics on the walls. On a table stood a photograph of His Holiness the Pope. The bishop entered, a dark, stoutish man, of middle height, with shining, deep brown eyes. He wore a black cassock and a violet skull-cap.

I think I should explain why I had desired to see him. While waiting in Paris for the arrangements to be made which would enable me to see for myself, both at the front and elsewhere, the great effort France was making in this moment of trial, I went one afternoon to Notre Dame des Victoires. The church was founded by Louis XIII and was so named in memory of his victories. It is held in peculiar devotion. There are many who believe that on September 8th, 1914, German soldiers saw the Blessed Virgin, who is the protector of Paris, with arms outstretched barring the passage of the enemy, in answer to the prayers that were addressed to her before the image in this church. Now the faithful pray to our Lady of Victories so that she may safeguard them from the scourge of war and that all men may live as brothers. It was a cold, grey afternoon when I went there. There was no service, but in the chapel of Our Lady of Victories was a great crowd. Rich and poor together, they sat and knelt in silence, men of all ages, women young and old, and prayed, and some of them wept. There were high officers with the Legion of Honour on their tunics and private soldiers in their drab uniform. I saw a young, strapping boy come in—he might have been just twenty and soon would go to the war—and standing at the back, ashamed perhaps to join the throng, with a set, serious face, his lips just moving, utter his silent supplication. Now and again someone stepped forward with a tall candle and gave it to the attendant, who lit it and placed it in one of the great stands on each side of the altar. The altar blazed with candles, so that you could only just discern the shadowed statue of the Blessed Virgin, with the imperial crown on her head and the crowned Child in her arms. Though all the candles, on the altar and on each side of it, were subject, I should have thought, to the same draught, it was strange that it had not the same effect on all. Some burnt with a clear, motionless flame, and they were like the

souls of men steadfast in their faith who faced the dark future with serenity, and some flickered with a wavering, restless light, and they were like the anguished, faltering souls of men who did not know, who feared and doubted, and yet with desperate longing sought that peace which passeth all understanding. When I left the church night had fallen on the darkened streets of Paris.

It is generally said that the French are a nation of sceptics. I have never believed it. They are a mocking people, with a keen sense of irony and a lively wit, but deep down in their inner-most being, notwithstanding their protestations of agnosticism and their ribald jesting at sacred things, there is a religious sense which, however much they would, they can seldom altogether escape. Catholicism is in their bones. It is inextricably connected with their love of the soil; it has its roots in their powerful sense of the family which we in England know so little. It is natural that in times of deadly danger, when the existence of the nation is at stake, the thoughts of men should turn to matters which in other times are crowded out by the multifarious occupations of the day. And while I was visiting the armies in the field, going round the armament factories, talking to the refugees from Alsace and Lorraine, chatting with officers in a man-of-war, I kept my ears open, I slipped in a discreet question when the opportunity presented itself; I wanted to discover what spiritual effect this war was having on those who were engaged in it; I wanted to know whether this great disaster had restored men's faith in God and whether, face to face with death as so many of them were, they found in that faith strength and solace. I beg the reader to believe that this was no idle curiosity on my part. The things of the spirit are all-important, and a people can neglect them only at its peril. But these are difficult things to get anyone to talk to you about and, thinking that priests must know a good deal which it was only natural would never be disclosed to me, I thought it wiser to address myself to them.

The bishop I was then visiting told me that in his diocese alone 500 priests have been mobilized. They have taken with them portable chapels, with for altar the consecrated tablet which can be placed on any support, the Host, miniature vessels for the celebration of Mass, and vestments made for them by charitable ladies in the diocese. If they can, they get the little case that contains these precious objects put on a truck, but if not, they carry it themselves with their accoutrement. They say Mass, often before dawn if there is work to do, even in the advanced trenches. Mass is served by another priest. I asked the bishop how the priests got on with the soldiers. Very well, he told me. They ate with them, fought with them, sharing their pains, material and spiritual, so that the men who had been accustomed only to see the priest flying by on his bicycle, his cassock tucked round his legs, and after their Confirmation had never had any communication with him, discovered that he was a man like themselves. His spiritual side inspired their respect. I asked the bishop whether in his opinion the war had occasioned in France a revival of religious feeling. "There is no doubt of it," he answered. "It is unmistakable." I asked him then whether he thought this was due to the fear of death. "Partly, of course," he replied, "but not entirely. For it has affected not only the men at the front, but also the reservists at the rear who know they will never be called upon to risk their lives." Men this time, he said, had not gone to the war with cheering and singing as they went to the last war, but with dismay, yet with determination, with sadness, yet with fortitude; they went as to a crusade; they went to fight in defence of their country with the same holy ardour as possessed the knights of the Middle Ages when they crossed the sea to wrest the Holy Sepulchre from the hands of the Saracen. "Without knowing it, they are mystics," he added, "and that is why they can never be vanquished." He told me also that since the outbreak of the war services were attended as never before; soldiers in large numbers came, officers too, and officials of the republic, who in the past would have feared, *par respect humain*, to be seen at Mass.

This phrase greatly puzzled me. *Le respect humain* does not mean what one would think it meant, and I had to have it explained to me two or three times before I could make sure that I understood it. I think it can best be translated as the fear of public opinion. A priest told me that when he met a parishioner working in the fields he would take off his hat and pass the time of day, but when he met him in company with others he would look the other way. "Why?" I asked. "*Le respect humain*." The priesthood recognize this powerful sentiment, and indeed regard it, if I am not mistaken, with a resigned and ironic tolerance, for none more than they know what allowances must be made for human weakness; but it is a sentiment strange to us English, who, I suggest, are on the whole indifferent to what others think of us. Perhaps we are less sensitive to disapproval and more obstinate in our self-will. In France you can kill a man by ridicule; in England you only have to laugh at him enough to make him an important public character. I have sometimes been inclined to think that one reason why the French and the English understand one another so little is that in England you can think anything you like so long as you behave like everybody else, while in France you can do pretty well anything you choose so long as you think like your neighbours. *Le respect humain* has had an important influence in France, but the war, by all accounts, has largely broken its power.

Another bishop, whom I met later, told me a little story he had heard from one of his seminarists. A hard-bitten old soldier who had been through the last war was in an advanced post with the seminarist, and he said to him: "Look here, my boy, you're only a half-baked priest, you don't know enough to open the gates of Heaven for me, but after all you're in the business and you can do something; if I'm hit and you think I'm for it, you just give me three good thumps on the chest to remind me to make my peace with God." This bishop, who during the last war was in command of a regiment, gave me a number of letters which he had received from his priests and deacons in the fighting line. They are infinitely moving, and I cannot but regret that I have only space to quote part of one of them. It begins as follows: "We have just been passing six days in the second line under the German guns and to-morrow we are going back to the front. Trench life will begin again. We shall have to work by day and fight by night. We shall have to dig trenches, build shelters and pump out the water that is flooding everything. Then by night we shall have to take our arms, our machine-guns and grenades and be ready to use them at the first alarm." And it ends thus: "Another time they called me to a man who had just been mortally wounded. They told him: 'Here's R. He's by your side.' He opened his eyes and looked at me, and when I said the act of contrition he repeated the words after me. I asked him if he would take the Communion, and he nodded. I put my little case on the corner of my cloak and I took the body of Christ in my hands and with tears in my eyes I said: '*Corpus Domini nostri Jesu Christi custodiat animam tuam in vitam aeternam.*' He had no sooner communicated than he died. So to-morrow I'm going up once more to join the men in the front line, but this time without guns or grenades, taking with me only the body of Christ to give to those who are to meet Him. We are all on the way towards Him and our souls are uplifted. Our souls are athirst for the truth, the justice, the love, of which too long they have known nothing."

Thinking, however, that from dignitaries of the Church I was likely to get only the official view, as it were, of this change of heart which so deeply interested me, I made it my business to get in touch with parish priests in rural districts. I went to see one, the curé of a village in the depths of the country, a red-faced man with waving thick hair and blunt features, who had been through the last war as a private soldier and had been severely gassed. He still suffered from the effects. He was a friendly, hearty soul, a peasant still, as his fathers had been before him for generations, and there clung to him a pleasant savour of the soil from which they had through the years wrung their bread. "It does me good to see how they're coming back," he said, his eyes shining with kindliness. I asked him too whether it was from the fear of death. "No," he answered; "they have gone to war from a sense of duty, and their duty to their country has made them recollect their duty to God." He told me that he had had a letter from a friend of his at the front, a priest, who told him how men took him aside and started a casual conversation, then made their confession to him; and how others came up to him as he was about to say his Mass and asked him to pray for their wives and children and for their mothers. "And what," I asked him, "do you priests think of being asked to fight?" He laughed. "There would not be enough stones on the road to stone us with, there wouldn't be enough slanders for our enemies to fling at us, if when every man in the country is answering the call of duty and honour, we stood aside. But we are glad to go. It is a war of defence, and so as holy as a crusade. Our lives cut us off in many ways from the lives of other men, but the war has brought us nearer to them. We wear the same uniform, we live with them in barracks and suffer with them in the trenches; we share their bread, their dangers, their sacrifices, and often we are united with them in death. The kindness they show us fills our hearts with humility."

But I do not want to bore the reader with an account of my visits to these country priests. I will only ask him to have patience with me while I tell him of one more, and I will speak of him because he was an Englishman and it was strange to find him as curé of this tiny parish in the middle of France. He had been in France for ten years, and his French, though his accent was terrible, was fluent and idiomatic. He told me that often he did not speak a word of English for months at a time. He lived in a little stone house, two centuries old, next to the church, and when the front door was opened I found myself in the kitchen. On the stove was cooking in a casserole the solitary dish of the priest's evening meal. An old woman led me along a dark and narrow passage to his living-room. It was untidy and comfortless, but a small stove in front of the chimney-piece afforded a grateful warmth. A shelf of books added a friendly note. The priest was a youngish man, tall and thin, with a weather-beaten face, brown hair receding from the forehead and a tonsure large enough to suggest that nature had left the barber little to do. At first he was very shy and kept trying to tie his long limbs into complicated knots, but he gained confidence over a cup of tea. "That's the one thing I've never given up, my cup of afternoon tea," he said. "I don't know what I'd do without it." So many priests have been mobilized that now he has had to take charge of six parishes. He says Mass in three on alternate Sundays and in the other three holds services on Sunday afternoons. "It's a bit of a job to get round to them all on my bicycle," he said. "I can manage it now, but I really don't know what I shall do if the winter's bad and the whole country's under snow. Who's that chap I've read about in the

papers who gives so much away? Something to do with motor-cars, he is." I suggested a well-known name. "That's it. I wonder if he'd lend me one of his old second-hand cars for the duration so that I could get round my parishes. I could say Mass every Sunday then, instead of every other." He had the same story to tell me as the others. He talked to me of such of his parishioners as had gone to the front. He wrote to them constantly, and they told him that they were pleased to receive his letters. He hunted all over the room to find the answer he had just had from one of them, and at last found it under his nose. He wanted to read it to me because it was from an uneducated man, whose father worked in the fields, and who had never before shown any interest in spiritual things. The priest put on his spectacles. "It's written in such a shocking bad hand that it's hard to read," he said. It was very short, but it seemed to me that no educated man could have said better. "I was called up to fight for France. It was hard to leave my home and my family. But of course it was my duty to go. Thank you for your prayers for me. I hope that God will give us the peace with justice that we are fighting for and that by His mercy we shall have security for our children."

I thought the dish in the casserole must be boiling away by now, and with regret I left the sweet-natured English priest, so willing an exile, to his lonely supper.

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By W. SOMERSET MAUGHAM

LIZA OF LAMBETH
MRS. CRADDOCK
THE MERRY-GO-ROUND
THE EXPLORER
THE MAGICIAN
THE MOON AND SIXPENCE
OF HUMAN BONDAGE
THE TREMBLING OF A LEAF
ON A CHINESE SCREEN
THE PAINTED VEIL
THE CASUARINA TREE
ASHENDEN
THE GENTLEMAN IN THE PARLOUR
CAKES AND ALE OR, THE SKELETON IN THE CUPBOARD
SIX STORIES WRITTEN IN THE FIRST PERSON SINGULAR
THE NARROW CORNER
AH KING
ALTOGETHER (*Collected Short Stories*)
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COSMOPOLITANS
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THE SUMMING UP

THE MIXTURE AS BEFORE
BOOKS AND YOU

Plays

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SMITH
LANDED GENTRY
A MAN OF HONOUR
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THE CIRCLE
CÆSAR'S WIFE
EAST OF SUEZ
THE LAND OF PROMISE
OUR BETTERS
THE UNATTAINABLE
HOME AND BEAUTY
LOAVES AND FISHES
THE LETTER
THE CONSTANT WIFE
THE SACRED FLAME
THE BREADWINNER
FOR SERVICES RENDERED

[End of *France at War*, by W. Somerset Maugham]