

"SOMEWHERE IN FRANCE."

Although the war is a year old, we have so far been content to do spade work at home, and watch the younger generation go forth to active battle. But duty in connection with the French Flag Nursing Corps called us to Paris; it was permissible, therefore, to note a few things by the way. Journalists of all nations have described the war, and marvellously tasty they have made it considering the spice of imagination required to dish it up. The Huns had no sooner blasted their way through Belgium than all and sundry desirous of earning an honest penny with their pens hastily attired themselves in wondrous garments, and fled over the water, prepared to follow the drum. Many of our women writers thriftily attached themselves to voluntary hospitals supported by an emotional public, and, dressed as nurses, or in hybrid attire, kodak in hand, proceeded to observe. Their observations are now turned to lucrative account on platforms or in book form.

From flash and crash let us turn to the humdrum everyday real little things, the movements of the straws which show how the wind blows; and it is marvellous what tales these little straws can be.

Take Boulogne, one-time refuge of those empty of purse—a haven where vulgar writs could not be served! Can this be Boulogne? This busy quay, bristling with martial ardour? Where are the picturesque fishwomen, with their corrugated faces and white caps (not in the least like the charming picture of the Boulogne matelote which we present on this page), and all the other dear familiar sights

and sounds? In the station the *Rapide*, which steams with so much deliberation through the lovely land to Paris, awaits our pleasure. On the platform, standing in groups, grinning and sprightly, are beautiful brown, blue-eyed, snub-nosed, straight-spined, large-fisted Tommies. We left their like at Folkestone less than two hours ago, but if we had not seen them for a year, and had just sighted a rescue party of them in the desert of Sahara, after days and days of sandstorms and growling beasts, and bruises from humpy camels, and empty water-

bottles, and sun-strokes, and mad Mullahs (one associates the desert with such disasters), we could not have looked on them with greater favour. Of course, we open the carriage window and pass the time of day, hand out the day's papers and all stray belongings, eat luscious fruits together, and feel so supremely safe and insular that Hymns of Hate sung by harmonious Huns, and jubilant Zepps, and tub-tumping, glass-cracking bombs don't amount to a row of pins.

In the station yard, motors fuss and buzz about; the Red Cross is much in evidence, and a bevy of "imperial" Sisters tuck themselves into a

large motor ambulance (about lunch time, we surmise), looking very fresh and picturesque. Then a lady, wearing short white skirts, the inevitable "Army" cap, large brown boots, and a mauve complexion, rattles a tin box in our ear, and demands alms in the name of *les pauvres blessés*. We comply, everyone complies, and as these syrens board every train in France, at every station (some-time, we regret to note, with open alms-cups), it is to be hoped *les blessés* benefit to the full



TYPE DE MATELOTE, BOULOGNE.

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