

my brother, when you were driving the plough into your little plot of brown earth?

"Here you are enduring a death agony of five months swathed in these livid wrappings, without even the rewards that are given to others.

"Your breast, your shroud, must be bare of even the humblest of the rewards of valour, Carré.

"But I will not let all your sufferings be lost in the abyss. And so I record them thus at length.

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"Carré died early this morning. Lerondeau leaves us to-morrow."

Do we always think enough of the feelings of our patients? Listen to the story of Mouchon's admission to hospital on a stretcher, with his mud-bespattered coat.

"You must excuse me," he said, "we can't keep ourselves very clean."

"Have you any lice?" asks the orderly, as he undresses him.

"Mouchon flushes and looks uneasy.

"Well, if I have they don't really belong to me."

He had not, but he had a broken leg, and the doctor ordered the boot removed.

"Mouchon puts out his hand and says diffidently, 'Never mind the boot.'

"But, my good fellow, we can't dress your leg without taking off your boot."

"Then Mouchon, red and confused, objects:

"But if you take off the boot, I'm afraid my foot will smell . . ."

"I have often thought of this answer. * And believe me, Mouchon, I have not yet met the prince who is worthy to take off your boots and wash your humble feet."

One chapter is devoted to Verdun, where the work is so urgent that only the "untransportable" are kept in the hospital there. "Ambulance No. —, which we had come to relieve, had been hard at it since the night before, without having made much visible progress. Doctors and orderlies, their faces haggard from a night of frantic toil, came and went, choosing amongst the heaps of wounded, and tended two while twenty more poured in. . . ."

"Each ward we inspected revealed the same distress, exhaled the same odour of antiseptics and excrements, for the orderlies could not always get to the patient in time; and many of the men relieved themselves apparently unconcerned. . . ."

"The pressure of urgent duty had made us quite unmindful of the battle close by and of the deafening cannonade.

"Sometimes a wounded man brought us the latest news of the battle. All these simple fellows ended their story with the same words—surprising words at such a moment of suffering: 'They can't get through now.' Then they began to moan again."

"A superior officer came to visit us. He seemed anxious.

"They have spotted you," he said. "I hope you mayn't have to work upon each other. You will certainly be bombarded at noon."

"We had forgotten this prophecy by the time it was fulfilled."

To the accompaniment of a bombardment of extraordinary violence the work went on "until the day when we in our turn were carried off by the automobiles of the Grand Route, and landed on the banks of a fair river in a village, where there were trees in blossom and where the next morning we were awakened by the sound of bells and the voices of women."

Read again the story of Gaston Léglise—a lad rather than a man. Both knees badly injured, one leg has to be amputated at the thigh. Léglise thinks aloud:

"If only the other leg was all right."

"I have been thinking of that, too, but I pretend not to have heard. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."

But, alas, the day comes when Léglise has to be told that the further sacrifice is demanded of him and resolutely he refuses: "I would much rather die." They wait three whole days and then Léglise gave in. The second leg was amputated at the thigh.

"Some one in the ward was talking this morning of love and marriage and a home.

"I glanced at Léglise now and then; he seemed to be dreaming, and he murmured

"Oh, for me, now . . ."

"Then I told him something I knew: I know young girls who have sworn to marry only a mutilated man. Well, we must believe in the vows of these young girls. France is a country richer in warmth of heart than in any other virtue. It is a blessed duty to give happiness to those who have sacrificed so much. And a thousand hearts, the generous hearts of women, applaud me at this moment.

"Léglise listens, shaking his head. He does not venture to say 'No.'"

He left the hospital nearly cured.

"Since then Léglise has written to me often. His letters breathe a contented calm.

"And always something beside me murmurs mutely:

"You see, you see, he was wrong when he said he would rather die."

"I am convinced of it, and this is why I have told your story. You will forgive me, won't you, Léglise, my friend?"

The secret of M. Duhamel's success is that he loves his patients. "They are all my friends," he says, "I will stay among them, associating myself with all my soul in their ordeal. . . ."

"Poor, poor brothers! What could one do for you which would not be insufficient, unworthy, mediocre? We can at least give up everything, and devote ourselves heart and soul to our holy and exacting work."

This is a book with a soul.

M. B.

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