

street. They gave us the warmest welcome, and really seemed to think it an honour that we should occupy their only spare bedroom and put them out in every possible way! They were French to the core, and told us many illuminating things about the Germans' behaviour to the Lorrainers during the war. None of them were allowed to speak a word of French, and if a syllable of the hated language was overheard by the officials, it meant a sentence of "fortress" of from a fortnight to six months. The Lorrainers were very proud of their sentences, and anyone who had not served "time" was looked on with a certain amount of suspicion by his neighbours. In fact, Madame Gredt told me, the *chic* thing to do was to place your sentence card on your chimney-piece like an invitation to a party, and if there were three or four members of a family who had all undergone sentences, the cards were displayed in a row or even framed!

We met an American general during the day, who had been a friend of Madame D'A. when her husband was Attaché at Washington, and I remember particularly Madame Gredt's amazement when he helped us up the stairs with our handbags and cloaks.

"Comment," she said, in her funny guttural French, "c'est un Chénéral ça? Mon Tieu, voir un Chénéral porter fos bagages! Chamais un Chénéral allemand aurait fait ça!" She could not get over this, and whenever I saw her again she always asked after "le Chénéral qui était si chentil!"

He certainly was "très chentil," that kind general, and that evening he and the staff gave us an excellent dinner at the "Restaurant Moitrier." I remember we ate *pâté de foie gras* and many other good things of the most surprising variety considering that Metz was supposed to be in a state of starvation! It was a wonderful evening, and, as somebody expressed it "La plupart des gens avaient complètement perdu la boule!" We were half-way through dinner when we heard the tramp of horses, the sound of approaching music, and the renewed cheering of crowds coming nearer and nearer. Everybody got up and went to the window. It is almost impossible to describe the fairy-like scene that met our eyes in all its gorgeous weirdness. It was the "retraite aux flambeaux," or procession of the troops round the town by torchlight. About every fourth soldier held a torch, and from our point of view the old street looked like a sea of little waving flames, with here and there an upturned face startlingly white in the torchlight.

The German element in Metz is not really predominant, but every now and then it shows itself in some startling or comic incident. For instance, at Moitrier's that night we were very much amused by the following little episode. A small group of obviously Teutonic Lorrainers were dining in a corner opposite us, and, to our great indignation, when the "Marseillaise" was sung they never moved, but went on eating their dinner as if nothing was happening. Suddenly a voice rang

out from the opposite end of the room, "Arrêtez la musique!" and in the silence that followed a young lieutenant advanced to the middle of the room with his eyes fixed on the offenders. He then ordered them in a ferocious tone of command to stand up, and automatically their hands dropped to their sides and they rose like one man.

"Sind Sie nicht zufriedent?" shouted the lieutenant.

"Ja, ja," mumbled the trembling Boches, and after that they heartily joined in the "Marseillaise" each time that it was sung that evening. I wondered at the time what would have happened if a German officer had ordered a Frenchman to sing "Die Wacht am Rhein"? I think he would have got rather a different answer.

The day after the entry we commenced work at the Hôpital of St. Clement, where we found three hundred and eighty allied wounded prisoners—English, Russian, French, Rumanian, Serb, Italian and American. They were all indescribably dirty and neglected. Food began to come in as soon as we arrived, but of course they had all been half starved, and some of them were most dreadfully ill. I have never seen anything to equal the muddle of the place when we arrived. None of the patients had had their sheets changed since they had been at the hospital—and some of them had been under treatment there for eight months; they had also never once been washed, and they were literally as black as sweeps and crawling with vermin. My job was to run the "Salle de pansement" and theatre, and my first day was spent in clearing out the mess from the tables and cupboards, and the piles of paper dressings and paper bandages, half-empty bottles, and old rubbish. Later on, in Germany, I saw some of the beautiful and specklessly clean hospitals which the Germans used for their own wounded, and I thought of how our men had lain and suffered month after month in the indescribable dirt and discomfort of St. Clement. How many must have died on account of the unhealthy dirt and cruel neglect! How often we have been told of these things, and how quickly we forgive and forget.

Metz fascinated me. I wrote to my mother at that time:—

"The old houses built right down by the river-side, the fascinating old streets, the glorious cathedral dominating the town, and then the strange mixture of German and French influences it is such a unique moment to see all these things. Every day massed bands are playing in the streets, and there are 'Prises-d'armes' (decorations of regiments, &c.) in the old square in front of the cathedral; and every day one hears, more and more, cries of 'Vive la France!' and one sees more distinctly that the people are gaining confidence in the French. I must not write more as it is very late and I am done to the world! I simply can't get even with all the things I want to tell you. We have slept in six different places in the last ten days. A pretty good record, isn't it?"

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