

NEWS OF VICTORY

The Story of the Turning Point and How the Word Reached Home

THOMAS M. JOHNSON

IN FOUR summer days of 1918, the world ceased to fear German domination and turned its eyes toward victory.

There were no seers then, to divine that victory would come in four months. There were only many anxious, hoping men and women who read with deep thankfulness that the last great German attack had failed, and then that the first great Allied counter-attack had succeeded.

They could know little of how such news of victory was gathered, written, sifted through the censorship, finally cabled home for them to read. That is one of the few stories of the A. E. F. still untold. Told now, from the viewpoint of the newspaper correspondents who had "box seats" at the climax of the great drama, it may help to show more clearly how the tide turned. Here is the story as it happened from day to day.

An old friend of ours, a major on the General Staff, stopped at Meaux on the afternoon of July 14, 1918, and was given the best entertainment the Hôtel de la Sirène afforded. He left in rosy good humor.

"Better come and see us," he said. "Our new Corps P. C.'s up north

in the Forest of Villers-Cotterets. You'd be interested."

That night, despatches written and the last Paris courier gone, we thought it over. Was the Major "tipping us off" to something, and if so, what? Then there fell upon the night a sound that banished speculation.

"Thump-thump-thump-ump-ump! Thump-ump-ump! Thump-thump!"

For two weeks we had been straining our ears for it—the simultaneous crash of four thousand cannon preparing the way for the great German *Friedenssturm*, the Peace Drive that was to end the war with a peace of *Deutschland über Alles*.

Would the Germans succeed? It seemed terribly possible in the tense days of early July, 1918. They had been attacking since March, and twice had almost broken through. This would be their supreme effort. Had the Allies reserves of men and strength to withstand another sledgehammer blow? Could they hold on until the Americans at last made themselves felt? Were our new divisions coming fast enough?

Paris was what the Germans were after—their ultimate objective. A little over a month before, they had reached Château-Thierry, only forty miles from the French capital and

now the apex of the Marne salient formed by that successful drive. Expecting a renewal of the attack, French and Americans had prepared for a strong defense the southern and eastern faces of the Marne salient and the Champagne front, beyond Rheims. On each flank, at Château-Thierry and in Champagne, an American division held the front line. Other American troops were in close reserve, though most of the line was held by the French. The blow would fall soon, that we knew.

Across the Atlantic, 110,000,000 people waited, knowing that their own flesh and blood must be in the path of the *Friedenssturm*. Many had already left Paris, and many of those who remained were packed, ready for flight. In Meaux, on the Paris road just behind the front, the newspaper correspondents attached to the A. E. F. waited to tell the world the outcome. We had all sent to our papers, within the last few days, despatches based on the reports of the American and Allied intelligence services, somewhat after this fashion.

"All signs point to an early resumption of the German offensive, in which, as the number of American troops in France increases, Americans have a steadily growing interest. For this same reason time becomes increasingly important to the Germans. If they have rebuilt their worn-out divisions at the usual rate, following the battles of a month ago, they should be ready to renew their attack with fifty divisions—five to six hundred thousand men—some time within the next fortnight."

And now that time had come. That was the only meaning of the

drumming roar we heard, of the great white light in the pitch black sky toward Château-Thierry—the flashes from many gun muzzles. We felt a creeping at the hair-roots. We looked at our watches.

"Eleven thirty," some one said huskily. "It's coming to-morrow, all right."

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The next morning, July 15, 1918, began early with the German long-range shells exploding in Meaux, and the rumble of smashed stone falling. Along the Rue Nicolas, shopkeepers began putting down iron shutters and packing up. The black eyes of little Napoleon popped almost out of his head as he served breakfast in the dining-room of the Sirène, deserted by all but ourselves. But Napoleon would stick. "*Ils ne passeront pas*," he said.

There was hubbub in the censor's office as the press association men struggled to get off hurriedly written "flashes" by the early courier to Paris, whose motor-cycle chugged impatiently below in the cobbled courtyard. A voice arose:

"Why can't I say the Germans are shelling Meaux, Captain? My God, don't you suppose *they* know it?"

One of our number carefully stowed his Corona in the car, explaining: "Can't tell where we'll finish up to-night. Correspondent without a typewriter, wouldn't be much use."

Our nearest source of news was some fifteen miles along the Château-Thierry road, in La Fertè-sous-Jouarre where the First American Corps had its headquarters. There we found the Chief of Intelligence, Colonel R. H. Williams, red-eyed and

pale-faced from lack of sleep—as every one was those days and nights.

“What is it, and how’s it going?” we asked, as breathlessly as pride permitted. “We heard their barrage at eleven twenty last night—”

“Eleven twenty?” The Colonel shot back. “That was *our* barrage. Theirs started at midnight. We knew what was coming and had the jump. Everything’s going fine. Note-books ready?”

Then he told us. Early that morning, following their great midnight barrage, most of the heavily reinforced Seventh and First German armies had attacked Americans and French on the southern and eastern faces of the Marne salient and in the Champagne, a front of fifty miles. The immediate objectives were the encirclement of Rheims and the capture of Châlons and Épernay; the ultimate objective, Paris. But Marshal Foch had been well prepared for this *Friedenssturm*.

German prisoners taken the day before had said that the German artillery preparation was to start exactly at midnight, so the French and American artillery—some of our men fresh from the training camps and firing their first shots at the front—had opened a counter-preparation forty minutes before. Nevertheless, the German infantry had come forward at different times between 3:30 and 4:15 in the morning. It was too soon yet to say that the *Friedenssturm* was broken, but it seemed to be checked. The German losses had been terrific. This was the news that was reaching the Corps from various points along the line.

On the right, in the Champagne, the French and the Forty-second

American Division, the Rainbow, had, as planned, evacuated the advanced positions. As soon as the Germans entered the abandoned ground, they had been struck by an artillery fire that simply withered them. General Gouraud’s “elastic defense” had worked.

In the center, near Épernay, some ground had been lost, but nothing vital. On the left and nearest us the fighting had been and still was desperate. The Third American Division, on the Marne just east of Château-Thierry, had been forced to give some ground. There was the place for the “hot news” that morning.

As we crossed the Marne beyond La Ferté, there came over us the battlefield mood, exaltation striving with depression, and repressed excitement struggling against apprehension, that sharpened some faculties, blunted others. The bridge was strongly guarded and one of its spans charged, ready to be blown up if the Germans got too close. Over it, headed for the front, rumbled wagon trains; coming back, ambulances. The sound of the guns, always louder, meant that we were nearing the front of the front.

From the bridge, we drove through troops moving in the same direction as ourselves, on their faces the taut, hard look of the front. In a woods nearby arose clouds of smoke, and branches and leaves were tossed into the air as shells burst.

We reached Château-la-Doultre, southeast of Château-Thierry, Third Division headquarters, in the middle of a staff conference. Col. R. H. C. Kelton, Chief of Staff, had traced on

the map the situation since the first shock of the German attack had, apparently, dislodged a part of the division from its advanced position. The French 125th Division on the Third's right had been forced to give more ground and General de Mondesir commanding the Thirty-eighth French Corps had ordered both units to withdraw somewhat to a stronger, prepared position. Major-General Joseph T. Dickman, the division commander, leaned forward, steel helmet tilted over his nose, lower jaw thrust forward, pugnacity in every line of his powerful figure. He glared through his thick glasses, as if he actually saw the Germans in his front line.

"Well, damn it, let's get 'em out of there," he said. Then the door closed.

That was a special, a vivid bit of history. It meant the launching of an American counter-attack, first of the day on the Allied side, and the sending to the French higher command of this now famous letter:

"We regret being unable on this occasion to follow the counsels of our masters the French, but the American flag has been forced to retire. This is unendurable and none of our soldiers would understand their not being asked to do whatever is necessary to reestablish the situation. At present it is humiliating to us and unacceptable to our country's honor. We are going to counter-attack."

The French G. H. Q. seized on the letter as propaganda to prove that the new American troops not only would fight, but preferred to fight. Published in American newspapers, it aroused great enthusiasm. But the

writer's name was not given, and authorship has been attributed to almost every one except General Dickman. The mere fact that the Americans had counter-attacked was hailed by London newspapers as "the best feature of the day's news."

The defense of the Marne against the *Friedenssturm* on July 15 was one of the most cleanly successful and heroic exploits of American troops in France. The Third Division held the southern bank of the river from the eastern edge of Château-Thierry for some seven miles to beyond Mézy where, in a northward loop of the Marne, the smaller Surmelin flowed into it from the south. This was the nearest point on the battle front to Paris, forty miles away.

The division's inexperienced artillery, some of which had got into position only that night, began its counter-preparation a half-hour before the German barrage came down. After that, when the horses were killed, the men time after time drew up by hand through intense shell-fire, limbers loaded with shells to feed the guns. After the German barrage came the gas, then dense clouds of smoke. The German infantry had been badly cut up by the fire of our green artillery, but they came on.

They came in boats, or at a shallow place, wading and swimming, or across pontoon-bridges. The scene suggested the Styx—the darkness, the oily smoke-clouds, the boats filled with gray men like gnomes in their gas-masks and scuttle-shaped steel helmets.

Along the river bank and behind the railway embankment waited the advanced posts of the Fourth,

Seventh, Thirtieth and Thirty-eighth Infantry, all old regular regiments. They were "filled up with rookies" but they were profanely certain that their rifles could stop the whole German army—so straight did they shoot.

They threw hand-grenades into some of the boats, and blew them up. In others they picked off the crews—the non-coms calmly calling out distance and windage—so that the boats drifted full of corpses. But at Mézy, two pontoon-bridges were rapidly built and crossed by troops of the Tenth and Thirty-sixth German divisions—both shock units. They attacked south and southwest. The attack southwestward was held, after a slight withdrawal by the Thirtieth and Seventh Infantry, along the Fossoy-Crezancy road, about a mile south of the Marne. But the Thirtieth failed to inform the Thirty-eighth of its withdrawal, so when the 125th French Division on its right was also forced back the Thirty-eighth found itself, around ten o'clock in the morning, in about as tight a box as could be imagined.

The regiment defended with some 3000 men eight miles of trenches facing three directions, west, north and east, with the east or right flank nearly six miles long! Luckily Colonel Ulysses Grant McAlexander—expecting "to fight it out on that line"—had ordered a few nights before that trenches be dug along the western heights of the Surmelin, facing east. It was this foresight, together with the bravery of the troops, that made possible the successful defense against the two German divisions that now attacked the regiment on the right and left.

Again the rifle came into its own. Firing coolly aimed shots, these "rookie regulars" beat back the attacking columns that sought to surround them. Artillery and machine guns helped, but of the five thousand German dead that were buried later on the Third Division's front, many had the single round hole that the Springfield bullet makes.

Censorship rules at the time and long afterward prevented the regiment or its commander being named in news despatches, though this was one of the finest feats of arms in American military history.

General Dickman didn't like the French order to withdraw. He proposed to get the Germans out of that part of his original front line which they still held. He ordered a counter-attack. The infantry of the Third Division went forward as if fresh and untouched by battle. They found some of the American advanced posts still holding out along the Marne, surrounded by heaps of German dead. By nightfall the only Germans south of the Marne in the division sector were prisoners, wounded and dead. Then the French order to withdraw was obeyed. So the *Friedenssturm* ended—so far as the Third was concerned. Not another German crossed the Marne on their front.

But long before night came, we were on our way back toward Meaux for the news of the early day must be sent as soon as might be. We passed Pennsylvania Guardsmen of "Daddy" Muir's Twenty-eighth Division coming up in support—they did fine work on the Marne—and the ambulances were fewer.

The censor's office was a battle-field too. Correspondents, full of their "story," strove to get it on the wires as quickly as possible, in all its import of hope and cheer. The Meaux telegraph wire was, as usual, choked with military messages. Motor-cycle couriers to Paris were our only reliance.

Early in the morning the censorship had been tight, but as more and more good news came in, it had relaxed somewhat. We were now permitted to say that "the first stage" of the *Friedenssturm* appeared to have been checked or something similarly cautious and safe.

Men came in from the Champagne front, a hundred miles away, dust-covered and dog-tired, but aglow with what had happened there. Their facts came largely from Colonel Douglas MacArthur (now Major-General), the dashing Chief of Staff of the Rainbow Division, who was accurate and dependable but never spoiled a good story and so was called "the correspondents' friend."

The Rainbow, with New York Irish and "Alabams" in the front line, had endured hours of hellish shell-fire on the "intermediate position" awaiting the German infantry. Little knots of men in blue came drifting back. They were of the new "Polish army," they said in fair English, being mostly Polish-American volunteers.

"The hell ye are the Polish army," the Irish replied. "Ye're Americans, like us. Stay here with us, and fight."

And they did.

Finally the Germans got through the advanced zone of barbed wire

and ruined trenches that the French had evacuated—and then shelled to bits. The Germans were shaken and decimated, but discipline held and they came on. They had tanks and cavalry, but the 75's blew up the one and the machine-guns cut to pieces the other. The gray-clad infantry attacked again and again, but they never penetrated the Rainbow position. The division interpreter had translated General Gouraud's famous order before the battle to read: "It will be a beautiful day." It was—in one sense.

Next morning the early news was still good, and it got better during the day. The Paris newspapers—"Dyly Myle! Cheeckago!"—were very optimistic, but not yet would the French censor let them speak of *La Victoire* which means much more to a Frenchman than does Victory to an Englishman or American. A quick trip to La Ferté gave the news that there had been no more German attacks since the evening before.

Now, in the meantime, a short, jaunty man in a blue-gray uniform, with a keen eye, who has been described as the greatest military thinker of modern times, Marshal Ferdinand Foch, summoned to his headquarters General Mangin, a stocky, iron-jawed Colonial brought from retirement because Marshal Foch thought, as Lincoln said of Grant, "I can't spare this man; he fights." To Mangin, Foch spoke briefly and to the point.

If we had known of that meeting at headquarters, perhaps we should not on the morning of July 16, have been talking to the intelligence officers of the French Thirty-eighth Corps, asking them the results of

their systematic interrogation of German prisoners taken on the Marne—yet what they told us was well worth hearing.

"He is not the same Boche at all!" they exclaimed with shining eyes. "He loses his morale. *Regardez!*"

Diaries, letters, post-cards taken from prisoners, stenographic reports of conversations with them, told almost the same story—discouragement, disbelief in eventual victory, occasionally even distrust of their officers. The most precious story of all was how the Kaiser, assured that the *Friedenssturm* would succeed, had watched the vain assault from an observation post on the northern heights of the Marne.

Later the German attacks were resumed, but they were weaker. Slowly they were obliged to give back some of the scanty strip of ground taken from the Allies in the first rush. Not only had the *Friedenssturm* failed, but the German Seventh and First armies were in a worse position, than when the Peace Drive started, troops and supplies being crowded down in the Marne salient, with none too many road communications.



At the close of still another day, checking over our notes and planning our "stories" as we rode along, we ran into an endless train of trucks filled with American troops, their eyes ringed with dust. At the main cross-roads in La Ferté, they left us. Later Wood said, he of the long nose for news:

"Say, those troops turned *north*."

Now, from La Ferté the battle front of the *Friedenssturm* was east, toward Château-Thierry and the

Marne, Rheims and the Champagne. But the trucks had taken the northern road. Our maps showed that it ran to the Forest of Villers-Cotterets, and Soissons. Why was that? They were going away from the battle.

Our chauffeur remarked, "Them was Marines—Second Division."

The Second was at that time the only battle-experienced American division.

That evening some one sauntered in to "swap dope" and said, "What are kilted troops—Scotch—doing around here? I saw some to-day, headed north."

The natural reply was, "Forget it, you can't write it, anyway." Troop movements were, of course, taboo in despatches. But it set one thinking again—troops going north, toward the Forest of Villers-Cotterets, away from the battle.

Late that night there was a telephone call from French G. Q. G., which delighted to move in ways mysterious to Americans, when it concerned news. Early next morning came a bang on the door and the brief announcement:

"Cars start early to-day—something doing!"

It was a perfect morning, the 18th of July, the sky blue, the sun bright, but there was a dark mystery in the censor's office.

"Drive north," was all they would tell us, "north, to the Forest of Villers-Cotterets."

That was where the Second Division had been going in their trucks, where the kilted troops were headed, where the new Third Corps headquarters was stationed, where our friend the major had said we'd be interested. It was some thirty miles

from us, on the *western* face of the Marne salient, not the southern or the eastern where the *Friedenssturm* had been stopped.

When finally our cars slid into the Forest, the noise of a great artillery fire was in our ears, and we saw that a new battle had begun. The Forest was filled with a new army, French, Americans, British, Moroccans, Algerians, an army that had struck the Germans at dawn that morning. Its guns were crashing amid the trees, its supplies going forward along the Forest roads.

With a sudden flood of relief, it came over us that here was the full answer to the fears and anxieties of the Allied world. The Allies still had the strength not only to smash the great German drive, but to turn the tables, to catch the Germans in their moment of confusion—to counter-attack! And the Americans were in it, playing at last a grand rôle.

Down woodland paths, dappled with filtered sunshine, came bandaged men in olive-drab.

"Second Division," they said. "Twenty-third Infantry. Ninth Infantry and the Marines are a little farther ahead. It's a big show, I guess. Surprise attack—French an' 'Marocs' an' us an' the First Division an' a lotta tanks. Dunno about the others, but we got where they told us to go. Got a cigarette?"

They had the cocky look of the "walking wounded" of a victorious army, proud of having done their part as men.

Familiar faces were at a thronging cross-roads where Second Division headquarters had been not long before. It had moved ahead now.

"General Harbord is up farther

front," they told us. "The Division's kind of balled up, just got here in time for a running jump-off, but we're going ahead. We sure are! Two or three miles already! General Bullard's in Taillefontaine, right ahead, big château. He's commanding a new Corps, the Third."



Our friend the major stood on the steps of that château, grinning broadly.

"Told you you'd be interested up here," he said.

General Robert Lee Bullard, by correspondents best beloved of Pershing's generals, who knew how to give out news, greeted us in his high Southern drawl:

"Well, gentlemen, always on hand when there's trouble, I see. I'll tell you what I can—I know you won't be able to write it all.

"This is a big thing, nothing puny about it," he went on. "It's Marshal Foch's doing. We are a part of the Tenth French army commanded by General Mangin, attacking the right flank of the Seventh German army on the western face of the Marne salient from here near Soissons, south to Château-Thierry—over twenty-five miles—while its center and left flank on the Marne and near Rheims are all tangled up with what's left of their *Friedenssturm*. It looks as if we had caught them off their balance, or at least not expecting us—struck them in a weak place.

"We may, I say we *may*, gobble up a couple of hundred thousand Germans in the Marne salient, if we can cut it off quickly.

"We'll give the old Boche a good licking, anyway. Our advance has gone far enough already so that our

artillery can heavily shell Soissons, which is his main road center, and the Soissons-Château-Thierry highway which is his main road in the salient. He'll have to give up the Marne salient and retreat to the Vesle, a long way from Paris.

"Now here is what, I suppose, is the American 'human interest,'" General Bullard continued, smiling mischievously. "The spear-head of the attack is right here between the Aisne and the Ourcq with the First Moroccan Division, supposedly the best French shock division, in the center, and on the left and right, the First and Second American. The Fourth and Twenty-sixth American are in it, too, but farther south. If this attack succeeds, it will change the course of the war. We and the 'Marocs' feel that we have the post of honor. Is that what you wanted to know?"

The General was bombarded with questions. When did the attack start? How was it going?

"It is going well. If it is going according to the plans of the High Command, the French cavalry has gone through and is near Fère-en-Tardenois," he said.

Fère-en-Tardenois—ten miles beyond the front!

"Is it a break-through?" We spoke the word almost in whispers.

"We don't know yet. Of course we hope it may be."

With such big news as this, there was no time to lose. We must get farther front for details and "color," then "step on it" all the way back to Meaux and typewriters and cables.

First Division headquarters was in a cave near the gray stone and red-

tiled village of Cœuvres-et-Valsery, which had been on the edge of the front line at 4:35 that morning when the infantry "jumped off." Now, the howitzers of the Fifth Field Artillery were firing with uptilted barrels, almost at the cave entrance. Lying on the ground in a hollow were the reserve infantry, asleep, oblivious of the noise or, if awake, making appropriate remarks to knots of gray-clad German prisoners. The supreme touch was given by an ancient French poilu who greeted a file of Boches: "Ah, nach Paris, eh?"

The cave, dimly lighted by stubs of candles, was a busy place. In an odor of earth and humanity, a sound of buzzing field telephones, clicking equipment and hurried bits of conversation in French and English sometimes drowned by the blasts of the howitzers, the picked First Division staff strove to keep the rapid advance under control. From Campbell King, unruffled always, George Marshall, one of the A. E. F.'s ablest staff-officers, and Bill Sherman with the German army at his fingertips, we got a precious harvest of facts.

"Go easy on the break-through stuff," they advised. "We haven't been counter-attacked yet, but we may be at any time. We've had no reports from our advanced units in some time. Last we heard they were going according to schedule. There are all sorts of rumors about how far the French cavalry have advanced, but they're only rumors."

The Allied counter-offensive of July 18, 1918 was the most audacious and spectacular on the western front since 1914—and the most decisive. Consummate generalship outwitted,

outmaneuvered the German General Staff which believed the Allies had no general reserve left and that the Americans were not yet fit for a big battle.

That attack fulfilled Marshal Foch's wish ever since he had become Allied Generalissimo in April—to strike back at the Germans. Their early June success, apparently striking, had actually given him his chance. The Marne salient it had formed was so vulnerable, and they had not fortified it. Immediately he had begun to concentrate troops and supplies in the Forest of Villers-Cotterets, to strike at its western flank as soon as an opening came. Mangin, whose motto was always "Attack!" and Pershing, who saw his chance to show what his fresh young Americans could do, urged it upon the Commander-in-Chief.

On June 7 Marshal Foch ordered plans prepared for a counter-offensive toward Soissons, to turn the Germans out of their Marne salient and if possible, in such disorder as to bring disaster. On June 16 the plans were completed, and General Mangin was ordered to carry them out. On June 23 and again on July 10, General Pershing begged Marshal Foch to use experienced American divisions in the attack. On July 13 and 14, he and General Pétain, French Commander-in-Chief, decided that the moment the impending *Friedenssturm* was stopped, they would counter-attack from the Forest of Villers-Cotterets.

But when the *Friedenssturm* came on the 15th Pétain, always cautious, had a mild attack of "cold feet." He was afraid of the German progress across the Marne, against the French east of the American Third Division.

But Marshal Foch saw that the situation there was not yet disastrous, and especially, that the Third Division's heroic defense would save the situation. He reversed General Pétain's orders of the morning as soon as he heard of them, and continued and even hastened preparations for the counter-attack upon the exposed German western flank. He believed he had sized up the situation correctly, was willing to gamble on it.

Before the day of the *Friedenssturm* had ended, Marshal Foch was concentrating with lightning rapidity, largely by truck trains, his last available reserves. To the Forest of Villers-Cotterets came the First and Second American Divisions, as Pershing had wished. Sir Douglas Haig sent two, later four, British divisions one of which, the Fifteenth Scottish, included our "kilted troops." He had almost stripped the Paris army. He had a strong force of cavalry. In three days and nights he completed the assembly in and around the Forest, and south of it, of 300,000 to 400,000 men, of whom over 75,000 were Americans. This force he hurled on the morning of July 18, upon the western flank of the Marne salient at the moment when it was jammed with German troops and supplies, confused by the repulse of the *Friedenssturm*.

Never was a stroke prepared more secretly. Moving largely under cover of darkness, men, even many of the officers, did not know where they were going. The Forest on the night before the attack was a scene unforgettable to those who were there. Amid a downpour of rain, troops, tanks, guns and supplies moved forward, along the few roads, to the

jump-off line, their only light the lightning, while thunderclaps hid from German ears the noise of their approach.

Absolute surprise had been attained. Major-General C. P. Summerall, skilled artilleryman, told how this time there had been virtually no artillery preparation to warn the Germans, just one or two minutes concentrated fire upon their front line, then a barrage of shell-bursts striding in hundred-yard strides ahead of the infantry. That and many tanks were all there was that day.



A big reason for the attack's success was that it was kept secret. Even American G. H. Q. knew but a short time before, and as for the American correspondents, it was thanks only to a few good friends, such as the major, and a certain ability to "smell a story," that we were not as surprised as the Germans. It certainly was not Marshal Foch's fault we were not. Our official notification came but a few hours before the jump-off. And if we wanted all the news, we must go forward to get it.

In the villages of Cœuvres and Cutry, on the edge of the battle-field, there was a feel of victory. The air was filled with smoke and gray stone dust made by exploding shells. The concussions jarred the air. Through the narrow, roughly paved streets pushed the supply-trains, trucks, limbers, ration and water-carts, drivers cursing in a dozen languages and dialects. And there was the purple-stained Pinard wagon that the poilus said, really won the war. No Frenchman could fight without his wine.

Ambulances came through, singly and in convoys. Most of them seemed bound for the emergency hospital center at Pierrefonds, but many wounded lay upon stretchers, and the sun beat down upon them, and the cobblestones slowly turned red. The gray dust fell upon faces gray as the dust.

They wanted water as much as cigarettes, but when a drink was brought many said, "Give it to that guy over there—he's got it worse'n me."

Between Cœuvres and Cutry we passed French cavalry, dragoons, big men in light blue and silver and black, carrying blue steel lances. They trotted past the long double line of men and guns and wagons that pressed forward along the road as a similar stream pressed forward on every eastward road for twenty-five miles.

Beyond Cutry were the fields of unripe brown wheat that our men had crossed in their first rush, a few hours before—the now famous wheat-fields of Soissons. The old No-Man's-Land had been wide enough for a few Boche machine-gunners to start their work. Here and there in the wheat lay the first of our men. Every one had fallen facing forward.

The helmets of parties of the First Engineers just showed over the rims of the shell-holes they were converting, with pick and shovel, into shelters. It is called "consolidating the position."

We came upon infantry, dirty, weary, sweating, at the edge of a ravine whence echoed the drumming of machine-guns. Black shrapnel clouds cracked overhead, but the weary dough-boys lay in the ditch

beside the road, or in little hastily dug fox-holes, most of them asleep after hours of fighting on top of sleepless days and nights. We got our news in fragments, from officers and men.

"We're held up just now—enfilade fire on the left. Goin' to try again soon's they clean out that ravine. Some of our officers are gone—machine-guns. We turned some of their own 77's on the Heinies over there. Do they fight? Well, some do, some don't. We caught some asleep at first. Machine-gunners are the worst, of course. Say, here's a story for you—Y. M. C. A. guy got hit, named Bartlett—bringing in wounded. Seen any artillery? We need 'em."

A little farther along, more infantry, remnant of a company. Their attack had gone well, they said, though "them damn machine-gunners" mostly fought their guns until they were killed on them, often with the bayonet. They had sent back a lot of prisoners—"them that behaved."



On the way back we went into the ditch to let some artillery pass. They were a picture of open warfare, horses at the gallop, riders plying the whip, gunners clinging to limbers. A moment later the sharp reports of the 75's were stabbing the air, shells screaming into the ravine.

A prisoners' cage of the Twentieth French Corps, under whose tactical direction were the First and Second American, was already filling rapidly with men in gray, of all ages, shapes and sizes, many in clean uniforms, caught fast asleep in their shelters. Those American divisions had taken

around 2000 each, it appeared. Before the battle ended some days later their total was 6500 prisoners and 134 guns, meaning that the casualties inflicted by them alone may have totaled 25,000. The two American divisions had 10,500 killed and wounded.

More stops and more questioning as we drove back southward through the still thronging forest, gave us further information to add to our store. The Second Division had, as always, made a splendid, dashing attack with great success. The Fourth, we heard, had done well.

The west side of the Marne salient had been crushed in. The Germans were, as a French staff-officer told us, *bouleversé*, upset. It was a great day for the Allies, the turning-point of the crucial campaign of 1918. Even though we did not cut off and gobble up a whole German army, even though the cavalry did not reach Fère-en-Tardenois, even though there was no big breakthrough—all of which were battlefield rumors of the day—the Germans were dealt a paralyzing blow. And the course of the war was changed.

On that day the Allies won the initiative from the Germans. A week later, with the enemy in retreat to the Vesle, Marshal Foch could tell General Pershing, Sir Douglas Haig and General Pétain that he proposed from then on to attack, always to attack. At last the Allies could do it, he said. The American reserves—arriving 250,000 a month—had balanced the scale. The tide had turned. Four months later, the war was won.

But no correspondent could write

even all he knew on July 18, much less what he guessed and hoped. The "story" that day was a serious responsibility for correspondents and censors alike. The bigger the news, the more carefully it must be written and censored, and this was very big news indeed. Initial success, while it must be told fully and without diminishing its message of cheer to the Allied world, must not be exaggerated. The public must not be lifted up, only to be cast down again. We must not, of course, name troop units, or quote any one, General or private. Above all, we must not reveal what we knew of troop movements behind the lines or plans or objectives.

When we reached the censor's office in Meaux, we found some special instructions.

"No names of towns captured until after the French *communiqué* gives them," said Captain Morgan. "Don't give the impression we are fighting the war all alone—remember most of the troops engaged are French."

Some of the newly arrived unbuckled Sam Brownes, unhooked collars and sought typewriters. Others talked over the "story" while awaiting the late French *communiqué*. The press association bulletins that the counter-attack was launched and American troops were in it must have been printed in New York, we thought, in the midday editions of that day's evening papers. A fuller story had been sent off by motor-cycle courier leaving Meaux at two in the afternoon for Paris.

Those despatches reached the central telegraph office in the Paris

Bourse between three and four in the afternoon, so—allowing five hours time difference between New York and Paris—they made the late afternoon editions, the gods and the French operators being kind, and the single P. Q. cable working, a rare combination then blessedly attained. The urgent rate, at which much of this news was wired, was seventy-five cents a word.

"It may cost my outfit \$3000 cable tolls before I get through tonight," one press association man remarked, "but I guess it's worth it."

American newspapers probably paid \$50,000 for news of that day's battle from American press headquarters only. What more they paid for the multitude of despatches from Paris, London, French army and other sources, can only be guessed.

Nerve-wracked censors worked rapidly with blue pencils, by the light of oil lamps and candles, explaining why this or that couldn't go, as nerve-wracked writers, keyed up by the emotional tension of the day and struggling against its fatigue, protested fiercely at changes in their despatches. A group gathered about the big battle map on the wall, awaiting the French *communiqué*. The telephone rang and Captain Hartzell took the receiver.

"Allo! Allo!" he called. "*C'est le Censeur Américain qui parle.*" Then:

"Hey, it's the French *communiqué*. Stand by to mark the new front line on the map, some one. Last courier ready?"

So it was you got the news that, after all, it was victory.

UNEASY VIRTUE

The Woman Who Doesn't Want to Miss Anything

MARGARET CULKIN BANNING

IT is difficult to tell her story without falling too deeply into the patois of her group, hard to disentangle her from the rest of the silhouettes about her. They are a procession of slim figures marching lightly across an age brutal in mental and bodily research, the decorative border of a time devoted to its body and determined to look after its soul without interference. Youngish women, with charmingly curved chins and legs, who pick up epigrams here and gossip there, listen just long enough to have something to quote and can conceive of nothing more vital than to defer the decay of the tissues and keep themselves fit for as long as it can be done. Their vocation is in perfecting their attitudes. For each silhouette, in the turning of her foot, the arching of her brows, the lifting of her beautifully manicured hand tries to strike her own attitude, which must differ ever so little from all the rest, and also resemble them.

Except as they suffer, they hardly matter to any one except merchants. But they do suffer occasionally and are for the moment of consequence. Childbirth and death catch up with them as do other great eternities, which their frightened wits slap at feebly but with a kind of hopeless

and impudent bravery. And mannequins that they are, they are pathetic conquests in the end, with the fashion-plate souls which have soared no higher than imitation would allow, drifting away into vacuity. That must be where they go. They are not vigorous enough spirits either in sin or intention, for eternal suffering. They did not want to be bad women. They only wanted to be smart women. It was not sin which interested them. But they did not want to miss anything.

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That was Marcella and it was why she was irritated at herself for wincing at Dicky Gamble's story. It got a laugh, which was all Dicky intended. He commonly made jokes for his supper, having so little else to contribute and no doubt felt that such an epicurean success as Senta's dinner demanded that he extend himself. This particular witticism ripped off a few more of the shreds of modesty and delicacy which still clung to his friends, but they were well used to exposure and most of them did not even shiver. Marcella, sitting next to him felt her mind grow scarlet, but that was because her mind was less disciplined than her body. She knew very well that there is nothing so dowdy as a prud-