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POSTE DE SECOURS

Night, black night ;
A steep and rocky road
With splintered trees and shell holes
By the side ;
Chaotic ruins of a farm ahead ;
A tower half shot away.
A fragment of a wall.

*
* *

Nearby a crumbling caved-in house
The ambulance is left.
A snake-like trench
Opens to the road on either side.

No light, save here and there, at intervals,
The flash of gunfire from the wooded hill
Across the draw ;
Then darkness blacker than before.
A crash !
An *obus* whines and whistles on its way.
A path up thru a ruined yard ;
A loose thrown bank ;
A sudden trench.
Then up a beaten trail,
With splintered boughs and shell holes
All about ;
A turn ;
A sharp climb up the hill ;
A black-mouthed open cave

*
**

A sleepy guard, with helmet on,
Awakes, and turns a light
Into your face...
" *L'ambulance — bien — descendez-vous.* "
His voice is dull ;
He turns his pocket flare
Upon the dark receding steps.
You pass down in the gaping maw,
Crouched over to avoid the roof of rocks.

♦♦

At last the bottom comes ;
The guard above snaps off his light
And all is black.
The air is hot and foul.
A sleepy *poilu* by the fan
Awakes and gives the crank
A desultory turn ;
The suffocating air
Puffs upward a few moments,
Then dies down again.

A turn ;
Ahead, and in a cornered room,
A calcium light flares white upon
The walls of rock.

*
**

Below the light,
Upon a stretcher-table,
Is a *poilu*, face unshaved,
His muddy uniform blood-stained,
His head thrown back,
His face contorted by the pain.
The *médecin* works swiftly,
And the *blessé* gurgles when he breathes.
The *médecin* looks up ;
" *Attends* " he says, " *partez — tout à l'heure* ".
Two other *blessés* — *assis* both —
With faces drawn sit
Without sound.
At one side a *couché* on a stretcher
Lies, eyes closed,
And groans with every breath...

*
**

You turn back to the darkness of the car
To miss the sight of pain.
Here in all the labyrinth
Of cavernous rooms —
Feeble flickering lights in corners
Yellow in the stifling air —
On dirty framework bunks,
On stretchers all about,
Or, without beds, down on the ground
On damp and matted straw,
Lie sleeping men,
Their muddy clothes still on.
Their dirty kits about them ;
Men in from all night digging
In a trench ;

Men from the forward line
Hope for a few scant hours
Of sleep and rest.
A *poilu*, overcoat drawn over him,
Stirs restlessly,
And groans in sleep.
From some dark corner of the place
There comes a troubled exhale,
And a snore.
They lie here, packed,
No space between ;
Back from the trenches,
Tired, nerve-racked,
Sleeping like the dead...

*
**

A *brancardier*, tired-faced,
Comes stilly up :
" *Attends* " he says,
" *Maintenant — partez — deux couchés*
Et deux assis — vite. "

*
**

Back by the steps some *brancardiers*
Strain upward, an inert form
Upon the stretcher.
Behind, another stretcher comes,
The *blessé* on it stifling back a groan.
At every move.
Two *assis* follow,
Walking dizzily,
One-wounded in the arm,
The other in the head.
He carries still his *casque*,
Its smooth steel side
Pierced in and torn.
On their backs
Their cross-slung guns

And loose strapped kits
Weigh heavily.

*
**

The entrance guard turns on
His flash again.
The group emerges from the cavern's
Yawning mouth.
The stretchers are set down ;
The bearers rest.
Then of a sudden
From the outer darkness of a trench
Come sounds ;
Forms appear ;
A stretcher, strangely still ;
Brancardiers.
They set it down.
A question asked ; the answer —
" *Oui, Mort ; tué — une grenade.* "
Then, as an afterthought —
" *Pour la Patrie.* "
A light flashed on reveals a form,
A bloody cloth tied up around
The arms and face.
The bearers set the stretcher down
And puff, and wipe their foreheads
With their sleeves.
The steel name-disc
Is taken from the wrist ;
The papers from the pockets
Folded up and tied.
The nick-nacks are done up —
A knife and buttons from a " *Boche* " ;
A hand made *briquet* ;
A tiny picture of a woman and a child...
All are gathered up.
" *Tué,* " a *brancardier* repeats again,
And then they take their covered burden
And pass up the well-worn path

On to the hill ;
On to the plot, with crosses all alike,
And waiting open graves...

*
**

Down the rough hill
The *blèssés* go ;
A star-shell bright,
Intensely bright,
Bursts in the sky above
And shows the shell-torn hills
As brilliant as in day ;
Mounts ;
Slowly burns ;
Drifts down, and dies.

**

The ruined house, again ;
The ambulance ;
The stretchers rattle when rolled in ;
The *blèssés* moan.
The *assis* take the seat
Along the other side
Their dirty traps and guns,
Piled in behind.
Then out of thin air, suddenly,
There comes a spent approaching hiss —
An *arrivée!*
Everyone drops flat upon the ground,
Or crouches up against a bank.
Down on the road ahead, a flash —
Red firebrands hurtling thru the air —
A deafening crash ;
Hot fragments rip the road about ;
The earth rocks under foot...
After, all jump quickly up.
The ambulance doors are
Hastily slammed and locked ;

The motor hums ;
The *brancardiers* stand by,
Relieved now of their charge :
" *Au revoir, bonne chance, monsieur.* "
" *Au revoir,* " you answer,
And the brakes release,
The car slips off.
A ditch ;
A bank ;
A new-made shell hole
In the road...
Then down the rocky hill...

*
**

Of a sudden :
Crash!
Crash! Crash! Crash!
The shells shriek thru the air ;
The guns!
The never-tiring guns again...

Robert A. DONALDSON.
August 15, 1917.
(Chemin des Dames.)

VERY IMPORTANT NOTICE

All men whose mail matter is now being sent to 21 rue Raynouard are warned that the Field Service Post office is shortly to be closed. " 21 rue Raynouard " will automatically cease to be a forwarding address in France.

By order of the Postal Authorities of the U. S. A. A. S. all enlisted men must furnish their families and friends, by letter or cable, with their proper military address in France.

Men who have left Sections of the Field Service should instruct the Marechal de Logis of their old Section to forward mail to the proper address.

For enlisted men the military address of U. S. A. A. S. Sections is :

John Doe
S. S. U...
Convois Autos
Par B. C. M.
FRANCE.

(Signed) : Thomas S. Bosworth,
Sergeant U. S. A. A. S.

GERMAN FOR "TANK" HAS 11 SYLLABLES, 35 LETTERS

WASHINGTON, Oct. 30.

Thirty-five letters are required to spell the one word, which, in German, is the equivalent of the four-letter English "tank" or "land ship", which has worked such havoc in the present war. The German word, as it appears in official dispatches received here, is Schutzeugrabenvernichtungautomobile, which, freely translated, is "A machine for suppressing shooting-trenches."

(Exchange.)

NOTES

Mr. George R. Young of the Boston Office arrived on the "Chicago" and is at 21, rue Raynouard.

Mr. Lanning McFarland from the Chicago Office who spent a few weeks at rue Raynouard has gone to Salonique as secretary to Col. Ryan of the American Red Cross.

We hear indirectly that Section 8 has a newspaper. We would consider it a courtesy to be entered on the "exchange list".

Dr. Weeks is returning to America, and Frank J. Taylor, formerly of Section 10 is collecting material for the history of the American Field Service.

Mr. Way Spaulding of S. S. U. 29 who was wounded on November 24th is now at the American Red Cross Military Hospital No 1.

Mr. William Valentine Macdonald and Mr. Edward Paynter McMurtrie of the Staff have returned to America.

James Wyley Harle, Jr. has been appointed Sergeant of Section 650 U. S. A. A. S.

We regret very much that Mr. Arthur Douglas Dodge will no longer be found at rue Raynouard. He has left the Staff to join his brother in the American Distributing Service.

Mr. Dodge joined the Field Service in April 1916 and left with Section 8. He was soon appointed Sous-chef of the Section and later Cdt. Adjoint, receiving the Croix de Guerre in April 1917. In May he entered the Officers Training School and in July was called in from the Section to join Mr. Andrew's Staff.

The "Bulletin" wishes to take this opportunity to wish "bonne chance au citoyen Dodge".

PHOTOGRAPHS

The photographer, Mr. O. King, who took a view of the Château from the garden has had same mounted as a Christmas card. These are on sale here, price Frs. 1.50 and if any one wants to send them as a souvenir to their friends at home they can send their orders to the office of the "Bulletin" where they will have prompt attention.

Any of the men who have been photographed with their car can get any number of copies desired, at Frs. 1.50 and have them

forwarded to any address. In ordering state plainly the number of the car, as this is the only record the photographer keeps. Some few photos are on hand of the cars in Sections 65, 66 and 68. Others would require from one to two weeks to get them printed.

ANNOUNCEMENT

We wish to make the "Bulletin" for December 22nd a special Christmas number and the Editor urgently requests that all who have contributed at any time to kindly send something special for this number, and that those who have not yet favored us with any items, will draw upon that store of latent talent which surely lurks in the soul of every ambulancier, or camionneur.

If all enter into the Christmas spirit and bring something to the general fund of enjoyment, even at a little sacrifice of time and with some efforts, it will add to the general enjoyment.

