

HEROIC SUZANNE SILVERCRUYS, BELGIAN GIRL

Her Graphic Description of the Hun Invasion, His Brutality and Insolence

"My prayer for the young womanhood of America is that they may be spared the brutality, the insults, the anguish and suffering that have been heaped upon the helpless womanhood of my own brave Belgium by the cruel and despotic Hun during these three years of horror.

"That the fair young women of the United States may escape the advances of the smirking German officer, when they occupied my city of Brussels, were angered because our girls did not fall in love with them and then proceeded to force their attentions upon them.

"That the girls and women of America may not suffer the terrible fate that befell many of our young Belgian women, who were lined up in the city hall courtyards of their villages when the Germans arrived and then were dragged into captivity, when those officers walked along the lines, stroking their mustaches and pointing to any pretty girl whom they desired, with the remark, 'I take this one.'

"That the women of America may not see their young men slain by the thousands as the German soldiers here sent out to the front, their mothers sent into the fields to perform the hardest of mental labor, their own sisters shot down in defense of honor.

"All these things have happened in my own unhappy Belgium—I have seen it all with my own eyes—and it is my prayer that you here in the United States may be spared all these things."

BY CHARLES W. DUKE.

THIS is the prayer of a daughter of Belgium, an exile from the barren ruins of her once fairy and happy homeland, who when she fled into Holland on her way to England and the United States, was told by her Teutonic tormentors "that she would never see her father and mother again; that she could never return to Belgium again, and that Belgium for all time would be German."

Listen, please, for a few moments to Suzanne Silvercruys, the 13-year-old daughter of a judge of the Supreme Court of Belgium, refined, educated, well born, speaking not in the cold, vapid word of the paid propagandist, but in the sheer innocence of youth-telling the story of her own outraged Belgium that was ground to earth under the despotic heel of the Hun and today dares not call its soul its own—until the allies have forced the invader back beyond the Rhine again.

Suzanne brings a message, not alone to the womanhood of America, but to all who read. She tells the story of stricken Belgium, and in the telling paints a startling picture of just what may happen to any other nation that lies dormant before the menace of the Hun German military machine. Like some modern Joan of Arc, Miss Silvercruys has survived the tortures of her crucified country in order that she may point the way now for all those hosts of humanity and civilization who are surging on toward the frightful glare of the battlefield—and on beyond it to the glow of world freedom.

Listen to Suzanne. She typifies all Belgium. What happened to her happened to all Belgium. What she has to say is more than the expression of an individual; it is the voice of all Belgium speaking through one of her fairest daughters.

Miss Silvercruys is now a guest in the home of her sister, the wife of Professor A. J. Carnoy, formerly a member of the faculty of the University of Pennsylvania. It was at this Philadelphia home that she told her story.

"War! You do not know the meaning of war here in America yet," she began. "Your beautiful young women sing and dance and are happy and gay. Your young men are marching away into the camps, it is true; but they know not yet of war in all its horror. You are busy preparing, in every town and city—and it is all very wonderful the way your great country is going into this contest—but you have yet to find out the true meaning of war."

"My prayer is that you may never know as Belgium knows; that you may never suffer as Belgium has suffered; that you will arise and end this terrible carnage before the Hun shall have arrived at your gates."

"I was but 16 years old that Summer when the storm broke over us. We were at our country home at Masseyok, not far from Louvain. In two weeks more I would have been on my way to Germany to boarding school. My brother was with the army—all our Belgian boys had to serve the Hun. He was in the front in September. There had been reports of trouble; many of the peasants came to my father and told him there were reports from over the border that Germany was preparing for war and would strike through Belgium. But we felt secure. Had not the neutrality of Belgium been guaranteed?"

"Then several days later came such news that there seemed no doubt the Germans were arming and would soon be upon us. My father hastened to Brussels and returned in a few hours. The government was still hopeful that Belgium would not be attacked and he tried to reassure the frightened people.

"And then, it all came like a bolt from the sky. At 4 o'clock in the morning we were awakened by a rouser on horseback, advising all the people that the Germans were coming and detailing each soldier to the mobilization point of his regiment. I remember first of all the drumming, the sound in the air and, looking up, we saw the airplanes of the German scout advance agent of the Hun.

"Can I describe to you all that followed? You have pictured some of it here in America: mothers, sisters and loved ones hanging on the necks of their soldier boys, unwilling to give them up; my own mother hysterically rolling in the earth crying for her own boy. I can hear yet the voice of my father that awful first night of the war as he knelt at the window praying for my brother; just praying that God would bring him back so that he could look upon his face and tell to him—whether his limbs were blown off or not, just so he could talk to him and see him face.

"You picture it—the retreat of Belgium before the advancing Germans? They came by thousands; yes, by millions later on. Before the Germans, along the country roads, straggled the peasant Belgian families, leaving their children and their belongings. All the time we could hear the dull roar of the guns. The roads were lined with our own brave troops—many of them never to return.

"Suppose here in the United States the German had appeared suddenly at New York with a mighty army and navy. You had fled before them to France, and then to Philadelphia. On the way you came to a village where you fell back until you arrived in Washington. And then after many days the German took his first step toward the city. That was what happened to us in Belgium.

"Then we found what war was like. My brother's regiment was in the thick of the fighting at Liege. He was in 20 battles until he fell fighting bravely for Belgium. Recovering from his wounds he was taken ill with fever; but we got him home and, yes, he is alive today and in this country, where he still serves Belgium.

"In these days our boys found what war was like. My brother was moving to a night attack with his regiment Liege against a party of German men who had occupied a vantage point at the top of a hill. As they tramped along in the moonlight suddenly the German artillery let loose. Next to my brother marked one of his closest companions; he fell dying; my brother,

brother tried to evade them, but had to turn back finally and tell them that their son had been 'wounded.'

"So Belgium suffered in the horror of those days. I saw the flames of Louvain as we retreated later toward Brussels. I saw all the horror of the stricken city. Walking near the ruins of burned homes where the Germans were digging I saw them removing bodies of women and children. The German officers saw me and commanded me to move on. 'Remember, you have seen nothing,' they would say.

"In Brussels I wanted to do my bit, so I asked my father whether I could not be nurse in one of our hospitals. I was but 16 years old and he laughed at my earnestness. However, I persisted and won my way. He took me to the hospital and introduced me to the head of the place who laughed again, when father said that I was determined to be a nurse.

"There is nothing you can do here," said the superintendent of the hospital, "except to peel potatoes and wash dishes."

"All right," I said, "then I will peel potatoes and wash dishes; it is my bit and I am very happy to do it." And I did it until later, when I took up the more active work of nursing the wounded soldiers. Oh, our soldiers were brave men; fighting until they were overwhelmed.

"I remember one brave fellow whom we encountered in our flight from

Peeling potatoes and washing dishes was all there was for a 16-year-old girl to do in the military hospital in Belgium—but Miss Silvercruys did it gladly "because it was my bit."

terrorized in the presence of death, bent over his friend, shaking his body and calling to him to speak. An officer stepped forward and shook my brother rudely and said roughly: "Go ahead now; you will see lots of that from now on." Eight days later my brother encountered the mother and father of that boy in a distant village of Belgium. They pressed forward through

the crowd to ask about their boy. My brother called to Louvain. He had been detailed to blow up a bridge at the approach of the Germans. It meant certain death to him for he must stand in the middle of the structure and light the powder that would blow up the bridge and thus prevent the advance of the Germans. But he saved my father fearlessly as we passed

and smiled as he told us bravely of what he was to do.

"Atrocities! It is all too horrible to recall, but I know many many cases; and for everyone who doubts that the Germans were merciless and cruelly brutal in their treatment of the Belgians I can tell of my own experience—and I can produce my brother, who also was witness of many barbarous things.

"Such a thing as to find upon the person of a wounded German the finger rings of many Belgian women was not uncommon occurrence.

"Near my sister's home in Louvain was a family whose home was invaded by the Germans. Several of the officers were at dinner with the family, when suddenly there came a great clamor outside the house followed by shots and a battering upon the front door of the Belgian home. In front several wildly infuriated members of a German patrol.

"Some one in this house fired upon our patrol," thundered the leader of the patrol.

"The Belgian stoutly insisted that

there must be some mistake and turned to his guests—other German officers—telling the newly arrived that they could learn from the lips of their own officers that the family had been seated quietly at the dinner table and that there had been no shooting from within the house.

"I tell you some one shot at our

captured the place they compelled all the young women of the town to fall in line. Included among the girls was the daughter of the Lord Mayor of the town. A German officer singled her out and commanded that she fall out of her place in line. He told her to go with him.

"The father of the girl objected, and

otherwise sinner tailor—and most of the street costumes now are in dark or neutral colors, so that the brave women who have suppressed personal predilections in refraining from mourning garb because of its disheartening effect during wartime may not feel unpleasantly conspicuous when "dressing like everybody else."

Among the new fabrics put out by the inimitable Rodier this Spring in Paris are several stuffs showing mohair as a basis. Wonderful materials are these, soft and supple for draperies and with a handsome sheen and rich texture. Mohair flit is a new lace used as yet exclusively by Callot Soeurs. It is a most beautiful trimming lace, combining mohair and wool threads, and is used on gowns and tailored wraps.

Modern Trojan "Horse" Used. Popular Mechanism. History's ancient example of camouflage, the Trojan horse, has a modern variation of peculiar interest. During the fighting near Cronone on the western front, some time ago, a horse broke his traces and dashed across No Man's Land toward the German defenses. When near the edge of a first-line trench he fell. The French immediately set camouflage artists at work fashioning a papier-mache replica of the dead animal. Under cover of darkness the carcass was replaced with the dummy. For three days observers stationed in the latter were able to watch the enemy's movements at close range and telephone their information to headquarters.

The Cricket on the Hearth. Dickens. A little figure very pleasant to me, she and the rest have vanished into air and I am left alone. A cricket sings upon the hearth; a broken child's toy lies upon the ground; and nothing else remains.



An exile from her outraged Belgium, her father and mother still "over there," Miss Silvercruys works here in America from 9 A. M. to 5 P. M. every day writing letters to soldiers, sewing, packing clothes, knitting—anything to help Belgium.



"Upon entering Belgian villages the Germans would line up the young women in the city hall courtyard; smirking, smiling officers would walk along the line, stick their fingers in the girls' cheeks and offer all manner of insults. An officer would single out a pretty girl and tell her she must go with him and do his bidding. If she refused it meant certain death, or a fate worse than death."

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SUITS, CONFORMING TO SPRING IDEALS OF WOOL CONSERVATION, SMART AND STYLISH

Tailors Resort to Ingenious Devices to Give Individuality to Spring Garments and at the Same Time Comply Strictly With Orders to Save More Precious Materials—Modest Colors Predominate.

FASHIONS for this Spring are inspired by stern necessity, not by the whims of the past. Years by one of the other classic styles, taken up by couturiers and manufacturers for modern exploitation. Materials must be conserved; that is the first and all-important requirement, and designers of Spring tailored wear have set their wits to work to evolve charming and attractive effects with the least amount of fabric possible. This ideal eliminated positively the following of any special style period of the past.

The new modes had to be made to order, so as to speak with conservation of fabric as a working basis, and simplicity the slogan. And very well the designers have succeeded. The new suits are as smart as heart could wish, and so cleverly have they been planned and cut, that one never thinks of conservation of fabric when looking at them—they nearly follow the new lines and express the slender silhouette and the ideal of simplicity and dignity that fashion now considers correct.

Jackets Short and Jaunty. There are stons and ston-variants; and there are saucy little box coats hanging in straight lines to the hips and there are trimly elegant models with longer coats in pelium effect, though one observes that the long-tailed pelium seldom goes all around the coat—usually the length is at the sides and back, the front of the coat reaching

skirt is beautifully cut and despite its scant width is graceful and not suggestive of skimpy material. It falls just over the shoulder as all tailored skirts do this season—there is no evidence of longer skirts in street costumes. The straight little box coat is distinctly jaunty, opening at either side of the waistcoat or pale tan cloth which has a wide, shawl collar that turns back over the blue serge coat. This tan cloth waistcoat buttons at the center front with five fancy buttons, the V opening of the waistcoat coming very low and revealing an inner waistcoat, or chemise, of white striped material. These waistcoats make the short, open jackets very smart, and one may have several waistcoats to give variety to a single suit; one jacket, for instance, of pale tan cloth, another of white pique, still another of satin embroidered in colored silks.

Of this type is a delightful little model of dark blue trice serge, a favored material for Spring suits. The

Modernized Directoire Suits. The more dressy suits have a directoire suggestion—what might be called 1918 directoire style. Some of these are gabardine or wool and mohair mixture in light shades, like pale tan, beige, and the new French gray which has a pinkish tinge; but most of the Spring suits are dark in color, women generally preferring to wear quiet and sober hues because of the feeling against ostentation and display just now, and also because of the bereft women who have denied themselves personal mourning garb because of the discouraging suggestion of mourning habiliments during war time. The woman who for patriotic reasons gives up mourning dress and goes into a sunshade. Open, the sunshade feels more comfortable when these clothes are not unduly lively in color or style. This is one reason—and a very good reason—for the simplicity and dignity of Spring tailors.

But for the occasional, formal suit which every well-dressed woman likes to possess for special wear, the pale tan, of "sunshine" tones are the favorites; or the new pinkish gray just referred to. Pale buff, etamine suits with wool embroidered motifs are dainty affairs, and beige wool and mohair and wool mixtures are reaching

a high degree of favor for these costumes. From Bernard comes an enchanting 1918 directoire model of beige wool and mohair mixture with a triple shawl collar opening deeply to show a smart black satin stock and tie, a three-tier skirt with sloping tunics and a broad soft sash tied at either side. Another French suit of gray mohair has a waistcoat, collar and cuffs of black and white plaid taffeta, with jet buttons and tailored seams piped in yellow.

"Bagasol" Is Newest Thing in Parasol Line. When Closed, Device Is Used as Reticule of Attractive Style.

AN interesting new development in the parasol line is the "bagasol," a most amazing contraption which leads a veritable double life—like so many of the ingenious new devices that are two things in one. Closed, the "bagasol" is a very attractive reticule of striped and flowered silk which hangs from the arm, its top gathered into two celluloid bracelet rings. Most of the space inside is occupied by the rib, handle and folded-up cover of the parasol which discovers itself when a deft manipulation of the reticule turns it into a sunshade. Open, the sunshade shows the flowered silk reticule stretched across its cover like an applied decoration, the celluloid rings hanging at either side of the parasol like swinging ornaments.

Infinite variety is shown in waistcoats for men with Spring tailored suits. Some are of immaculate white pique, some are of bisque or chamoisecolored linen, others are of cloth still under the aegis of the German defense coats of Japanese embroidery. The gay waistcoat gives a pleasing note to an

otherwise sinner tailor—and most of the street costumes now are in dark or neutral colors, so that the brave women who have suppressed personal predilections in refraining from mourning garb because of its disheartening effect during wartime may not feel unpleasantly conspicuous when "dressing like everybody else."

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