

TRAIL OF THE BARBARIANS

By Pierre Loti.

Translated by Ford Madox Hueffer.

CHAPTER II.

"Must it be that our civilization shall rise up her temples upon the dead piled mountains high, by the side of oceans of tears and to the sound of the death-rattle in the throats of the dying? Yes," Field Marshal von Haeseler.

Now that the spring—inscrutable or ironic—has brought back here its clank of verdure and the song of birds, nothing smiles amongst our new-made ruins, which seem as if they were still bleeding. On the contrary, the abomination of the German handiwork only appears more revolting because of the spring. And I believe that these dead landscapes, from which we have just driven out the barbarians, but to which the country people have not yet returned, and in which the distant grumbling of the cannon alone mixes with the small estate thrillings of the nightingale—I think that these dead landscapes are more lugubrious than they were in winter.

A May sky, tranquil and tender, coloured rose-gery, has been stretched like a uniform veil above my long day's journey. It makes the green of the new leafage and of the interminable carpets of grass appear more vivid.

And it is too tufted, this grass, which hides up rage and sinister debris, and seems to cover up, more than of right it should, this soil of the plains—this earth which has been deeply turned over in ditches and in trenches, which is sown with fascines and great fragments of ironwork, with here and there shell-holes and monstrous craters.

From time to time you will see a village—and it has no longer the shape of a village; the cottages will have fallen down around the fallen church, so that it will resemble a house of cards when the table has been shaken. There are also woods—and these will display to you only tortured and riven trunks upon which rare branches seek still to hang out a holiday finery of greenness, as was their habit in the quiet springs of former years. Of course, as you come nearer to the zone that the enemy still hold, horror becomes more manifest; but though the guns sound louder and louder, they cannot silence the song of the birds. One of the strangenesses of these deserts which have been created in the open country of France is the profusion of barbed wire which serpentine across the whole landscape; this ravel of entanglements, thirty or forty feet wide, bristling with arresting spikes, crossing each other, and interlacing for miles and miles, running out of sight through the too-luxuriant tufts of grass, bears witness to the tremendous industry of whole legions of human spiders. How many years will it take to remove all these entanglements, to level all this torn earth? We have to rebuild the towns and villages; but even without that, how many years will it take us to clear away so much old iron, the immense number of fragments of shells that have fallen like hail? . . . Those which have not burst will be a menace for many years to the tillers of the soil . . .

I remember a meeting, amongst the silent ruins of a hamlet, where masses of wall flowers were like yellow gold upon the upright surfaces of the walls and the lilac burgioled out in violet profusions, amongst vague enclosures that had formerly been little closes. Two very old women still lived there—very old women, with white hair, their cheeks seamed, their eyes haggard; they seemed to have been stupefied. Since they were so old they were worthless, the Germans had left them behind. And who will say what has become of their sons and daughters? Who shall say what tortures of waiting, or moral anguish, of physical terror they have endured, whilst they shivered at the bottom of their cellars—for two or three winters, whilst they waited for the French to come back? I first saw them beside a well—a well which for generations had furnished their family with clear water. They had just drawn a bucketful painfully, with a frayed cord, and they were smelling it distrustfully. "It still smells," one said, and the other, "Yes, yes, it smells. Throw it away quickly."

These little trivial phrases, uttered with a sort of mournful lassitude, were as plaintive to hear as any complaints that you could make up. We know that when they went away the Germans had paid the place the delicate attention—the delicatessen—of poisoning all the water. In the pockets of their prisoners—or of their dead, as far as that goes—there have been found the precise orders of their officers: "Private So-and-So, with his squad, will take charge of the wells. He will throw into them, in sufficient quantity, poison, creosote—or refuse, in default of these."

And now, as our journey proceeds, down there, far away, thousands of pyramidal shapes begin to show—red-dish and irregular, they cover a vast space. . . . They are the gasping ruins of an unfortified town—one of the great and fair cities of France. Two months ago it still existed. But the labours of the anthropoid civilizers have there indeed been "without equal" . . . "Private So-and-So, with the assistance of his squad," so run the irrefutable service orders found in the German

pockets, "will carry the incendiary materials into such-and-such houses. This fatigue party will place the explosives detailed in the margin in such-and-such cellars." And the meticulous carrying out of these orders has been marvelous in its effects.

Your first entry into the town will cause in you a poignant and unforgettable impression of anguish, of revolt, of stupor. You will have the impulse to cry out, to blaspheme. What a masterpiece it all is—of mad destruction! Assuredly, nowhere, nor in any epoch of the world's history, is there a record of horror comparable to this. And then . . . it was done all at once; and it was done only yesterday, as it were—an immense wound in still pulsating flesh.

In this great city, street succeeds street and open place to place; and the destruction is everywhere alike. Not one house, small or large, but has been gutted from top to bottom; they display, these houses, their interiors, as if their entrails had been three parts scattered to the winds. You would say they had all been decapitated and disembowelled. The higher and the more luxurious they are, the more improbable do they appear; the flat surfaces of their ruined walls, which from a distance looked capricious pyramids, remain in places upright to the slopes of the roofs, and the wallpapers, and sometimes even the pictures and mirrors, are still afloat. In mid-air you will see sofas and arm chairs still new. Beds, which slope or hang over the edges of destroyed floors, held up by one leg; and clothes of all sorts that have been vomited forth by wardrobes. Gilt shop signs dance a death saraband over the heaps of brickdust that represent homes. Houses and roofs, in places, have not altogether fallen, and the tottering walls seem to have hats on one side, like chasseurs; a gust of wind or a transport wagon are enough to cause whole landslides.

Nevertheless, there is a population for these long streets, for this landscape of hell—a population though the shells have never ceased falling. In the first place, there are the horizontal detachments of our soldiers; then there come the few old women—always the old women who are found in ruined towns, left behind by the Germans—old middle-class women or the aged poor, like things discarded as useless, haggard, with wandering expressions, and the looks of saints or of martyrs. And our dear blue soldiers who entered the town so very lately with such hurricane rage, with such a passion for vengeance, saunter about very calmly, prepared already to pardon. There are even some, escorting groups of prisoners, who talk to them almost like comrades. . . . In this France we are too good-natured. . . .

I think it is in the poorer quarters of this town that the emotion of pity is the strongest—amongst the little humble households. They have been got together at the cost of years of toil and economy; they have been destroyed in a minute because of an obsolete order from Berlin. . . . Oh, poor, poor, peoples!

Amongst so many thousands of details certain ones arbitrarily remain in the mind. Thus, I remember, on the first story of a certain house, above heaps of bricks, a little remembrance of a first communion which hangs still, unscathed, upon a nail in the wall, and seems to look at passersby through the gaping opening in the front wall. In another place, in what remains of a room with blue wallpaper, a very little white lace dress still hangs from a peg, the sleeves falling forward as if the head were bowed—the best little dress of some workman's daughter who wore it on her Sunday walks. . . . And forever and forever you may go on walking and walking, returning on your tracks, changing your direction; but you never change the character of your pilgrimage—the ferocity of destruction has missed nothing. And, when they return, those exiles who have not died in slavery may not expect to find in their homes anything of all the things that were dear to them. Nothing but this chaos is in store for them; and it would be better to wish that they may never return—that they may never again see their homes—for it is all irreparable. Before we shall even be able to think of rebuilding we shall have to labour at levelling the ruins. . . .

It is possible that so much human labour which stood for the achievements and aspirations of many centuries should have been rapidly blotted out in two days? For that was about the time it took; they had laid in such a store of explosives. And our allies who had come to deliver the towns—the allies here, as on the outskirts of other towns from which we have driven the barbarians—were forced to look on at the nameless sacrifice, to see all the town flame to the heavens, to witness the crumbling away of the whole town when they were too far away to stay it. . . .

How miserable to have done all that—and how stupid! Besides being unspeakable, it is the mark on the landscape of that heavy Teutonic stupidity which even in the day of Frederick, misnamed the Great, amused Voltaire so much. For, when everything is said and done, of what good is it to anyone and whom can it profit to have proclaimed, to have written down

Forerunners of Fall Millinery



In July the woman who must provide herself with new headwear turns her back upon summer materials—straws and summer flowers—and asks for something new. It seems she likes to anticipate and foreshadow the season ahead in her millinery. This and the knowledge that summer is waning and another summer will bring its own new millinery allurements, makes her buy hats for fall even in the dog-days, as she crowns her head with straw in January or February—with the snow flying.

The shops and stores are now full of fabric hats for the demi-season, between summer and early winter, and include many hats for fall that will outlast that season and do service in the winter as well. There has been a growing appreciation of beautiful lines that has resulted in the most becoming shapes we have ever had. Crowns are usually soft and often draped. These models passed the old acid test of good millinery—that is "the woman must look better in her hat than without it"—or it is not a successful hat.

Much effective, but not intricate, needle work appears in new millinery—tinsel thread, chenille, heavy embroidery silk and yarns of all sorts. Millinery workrooms feel the obligation to save time and materials as a war measure, therefore work on hats must not be lavish, but what there is of it must be beautifully done.

The group of three lovely hats far shown above tells much more plainly than words can the first of the story about the new season's

styles. At the left a soft round hat is an example of clever use of cut out felt over satin. Long stitches outline the cut out and either chenille or silk could make them. There is a frivolous but fascinating pompadour at the front which proclaims it a hat for the young woman.

Just below it is a hat for late summer and early fall of navy blue and white tulle. Daisies and rings of white felt are joined by stitches of yarn in a band for crown and brim. At the front there are two ornaments covered by being wound with folds of silk. Delicateness and elegance proclaim this a model that would triumph anywhere—among women of fine taste. At the right a rich looking and picturesque model is prophetic of winter made of some novelty in fabrics that outlasts velvet. It has facing of satin, placed with such exquisite finish in the workmanship that it makes the hat a novelty of the highest class. And the trimming is a simulated quill made of the same fabrics as those in the hat—another example of what the millinery artist can do by combining materials and ideas.

Julie Bottomley

Chain Girdles Worn.

Last year's fascinating chain girdles gripped the public fancy to such an extent that they seem to be just as much in demand this season as last.

indisibly, for the edification of a whole world, such a record of incurable savagery—just to satisfy a mad lust for destruction in an emperor?

"Without equals." . . . Yes, Professor von Lanson; oh, yes, in truth the Germans are without equals. Happily, it is true for humanity that their lies does not exist. . . .

And, my God, to think that there are still neutrals! But that must be because they cannot believe, because they do not know, because they have not seen with their own eyes . . . all this. Ah, how I have longed to bring some of my Spanish friends here. Assuredly, then, the scales would fall from their eyes. . . .

If I think more particularly of Spain, of chivalrous Spain, it is because I have loved her so dearly during the quarter of a century that I have lived near her frontiers. . . . We shall do without her help, and when it is all finished, it is not that I shall grudge her her share of the deliverance that we shall bring to Europe. But I have so wished to see her at our side, united in suffering—and in honour. . . .

For a long while I have been going through this agonizing town with its suburbs as infernally ravaged as its

quasi-opulent centre; and then we come to a region where there awaits us, as a final horror—the tragedy of the trees. . . .

"Private So-and-So, with his fatigue-party," so runs this unspeakable order, "will attend to the sawing through of fruit trees." And methodically as in everything else, these people set to work. In a zone six or seven miles wide great pear trees and apple trees a hundred years old, the chief riches of the peasants, were aligned along the borders of the roads or in the orchards; and the gorillas (not neglecting to destroy the smallest hamlet) found time to saw them all through a yard above the earth. As soon as the branches of the one tottered and fell over, they passed on to the next, without losing precious minutes, in their haste to finish them all. And so some of these beautiful pyramids of trees, lying along the earth, are still attacked to their trunks by a

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really done anything about next winter's fuel supply except to badger the coal man and criticize the Fuel Administration? Have you overhauled your furnace? Have you got an ash sifter? Have you considered whether it is really a good plan to throw the dampers open until the house is stifling and then open the windows?

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