

The American Rainbow on the "Via Dolorosa of the French Refugee"

Exiles From Their Homes Before the Hun Advance in 1918 Find Spiritual Consolation and Material Sustenance Provided by the United States Vastly Different From 1914

BY BERTRAM KELLY.
PARIS—"In this German drive I find myself thinking less about the men who are staying off the Germans than about the people who have had to leave their homes because cannon are plowing their fields and gas clouds are rolling over them. A battle used to mean—just a battle. Now it means—to me, anyway—the exile of tens of thousands of men, women and children. It ought to mean both things probably—the unbeatable nerve of the French troops who have blocked up the allied line and have also after four years of it, and the endurance of the countrymen and townspeople who have had to leave their homes again, some of them for the third time since the war began—but my brain is simply not big enough to take in the whole picture. That's why I see things today but the via dolorosa of the refugee."

The speaker is a woman relief worker, and if her imagination, compassing the tragic pilgrimage of the civilian war sufferer, fails to grasp the inferno of the battle front, that is because her work of lightening the load of tired pilgrims has kept her back of the fighting lines.

Even at the front the "military observer" is not blind to the drama of the displaced ones who wear neither *croix de guerre* nor khaki. The correspondent of the London Times, for instance, writes a paragraph over which his editor sets the imbecile sub-title, "Cheerful Refugees."

"The roads have been closed to all but the military, with one notable and pathetic exception, the troops of townsfolk and villagers whom it has been thought wise to evacuate, not only from the districts already occupied by the enemy, so far as that was possible, but also from a wide zone behind the actual front. I do not know which is the more poignant feeling—the pity with which I have watched these unhappy victims of the war, many of whom have already spent two years under the cruel dominion of the Germans, while others have lived for long months virtually on the battlefield, or the astonishment which fills me at the extraordinary cheerfulness and courage with which they accept their enforced exodus from their homes. But they all look forward to victory and a speedy return to the hope which not all the bombs of the enemy can drive out of their brave hearts."

The editorial caption, "Cheerful Refugees," is a cheerful lunacy, but almost everything in the paragraph that the correspondent himself wrote from the battle line is right as rain.

The Glean of a Tomorrow.
In the past the march of the refugees has been pretty much a march without hope, with a progress, if not from bad to worse, then from bad to equally bad. This time there's a rainbow at the end of the muddy road. French organization for aid for the war exiles is naturally the better for experience, and, shoulder to shoulder with French societies, one finds throughout France representatives of the American Red Cross striving in friendly co-operation. Just as Foch has the promise of General Pershing that every American soldier and every ounce of our war material is at the service of France in this the gravest moment of the war, so the French refugees have, at every stage of his journey from the fire zone, the resources, the personnel and, above all, the effective amity of the Americans.

If we could quote from the reports telegraphed in to Paris headquarters by various field delegates of the Red Cross, informing headquarters of the needs of the refugees, the story might be a long one, but it would be worth telling. From Rouen such a report told on April 3 of the presence of 12,000 in Rouen and its immediate suburbs and of some 55,000 in the entire department (27,000 of them Belgian refugees). Within a week 20,000 new arrivals, mainly from Amiens, have passed through Rouen, and the report I have seen tells just what was needed from the Americans in the way of beds and bedding. But you prefer in these matters to quote, not prejudiced Yankees, but the French themselves. It is in the Paris Journal that you read the narrative of a citizen of Noyon:

"We traveled part of the way in an automobile truck provided by the American Red Cross," this father of a large family told the Journal reporter at the railway station in Paris. "It was a hard trip and a long one, but we didn't mind it, for on the road we met infantrymen of our own army and artillery of our own—yes, lots of both; and for my part, I think the Germans will pay dear for their first success. How they sing, our pollard! Nothing else!"

The tired man of Noyon might, had he gone on, have told more of the troop trains with their big motor windows in the trains of the refugees. Pipe in mouth and calm under the blue casque of steel which glinted in the sun, a veteran his almost classic dignity, the soldier of 1918 is seldom shouting and not always, by any means, singing, as he looks out of the motor window. In 1918, railway cars are not labeled "To Berlin" in chalk. No one can expect all Europe to be war-weary without the French notice being weary, too. But the reinforcements who are on the way to help Foch with a new Marne, a new Verdun, have something much better than bravado. They have experience—knowledge of the great task before them—confidence in their leadership.

"We'll be in the dance tomorrow," a noncom estimates, between puffs; and one of his mates adds: "And we know that dance floor." The American Red Cross, in its canteens for refugees, asks no questions when the polka drifts up to its coffee counter between dances or walks with affection upon its proper and the canteen merely fills his cup particularly full.

On the Job.
As one of the sympathetic French accounts of the refugee drama and American assistance puts it, "The American Red Cross had, long before, installed at Noyon, Ham, Arras and elsewhere in the regions mottled, delegates charged with helping to build up, agriculturally and socially, these regions liberated. When the offensive came it found these delegates provided with food-stuffs in their warehouses, and with motor vehicles, the food proved invaluable as emergency rations; the motor vehicles, placed at the disposal of our poor compatriots obliged once more to leave their homes, were no less precious." And the French journalist closes his account of the evacuations by saying: "By reason of the number of refugees arriving at the Gare du Nord, the police authorities have had to take special measures to provide for their reception. In the first place, they have had to make room for the American Red Cross, which, with friendly zeal, has offered all its resources on the subject of the refugees."

All this is said more sweetly than an American finds it good taste to say it. What any visitor to the Paris railway station can unreservedly praise in the spirit of friendliness, co-operation and sympathy which has marked the team play of the French police and their American helpers in feeding, reclothing, welcoming, and moving on the new arrivals, a service which, day and night, is distinguished



The Little Refugee Boy Does Not Seem to Be Much Afraid of the American Red Cross Uniform.

by its freedom from anything like condescension or charity. In behalf of the department in France and not in Paris only, the representatives of the American Red Cross are busy co-operating with the French authorities in installing refugees. A fair sample of the team play referred to above is the report I have recently seen from a sister of the late Lord Kitchener, now delegate of the American organization in the Department of the Cotes, du-Nord, with headquarters in the town known to tourists as William the Conqueror's birthplace.

New Fountains of Hope.

This report says in part: "I have just been inspecting the refugees at St. Etienne. They brought away an amazing amount of luggage with them and they will find beds and bedding at the places they are to go to. They were in wonderful spirits the second day, having had good meals and a night's rest, but it was a sad sight all the same."

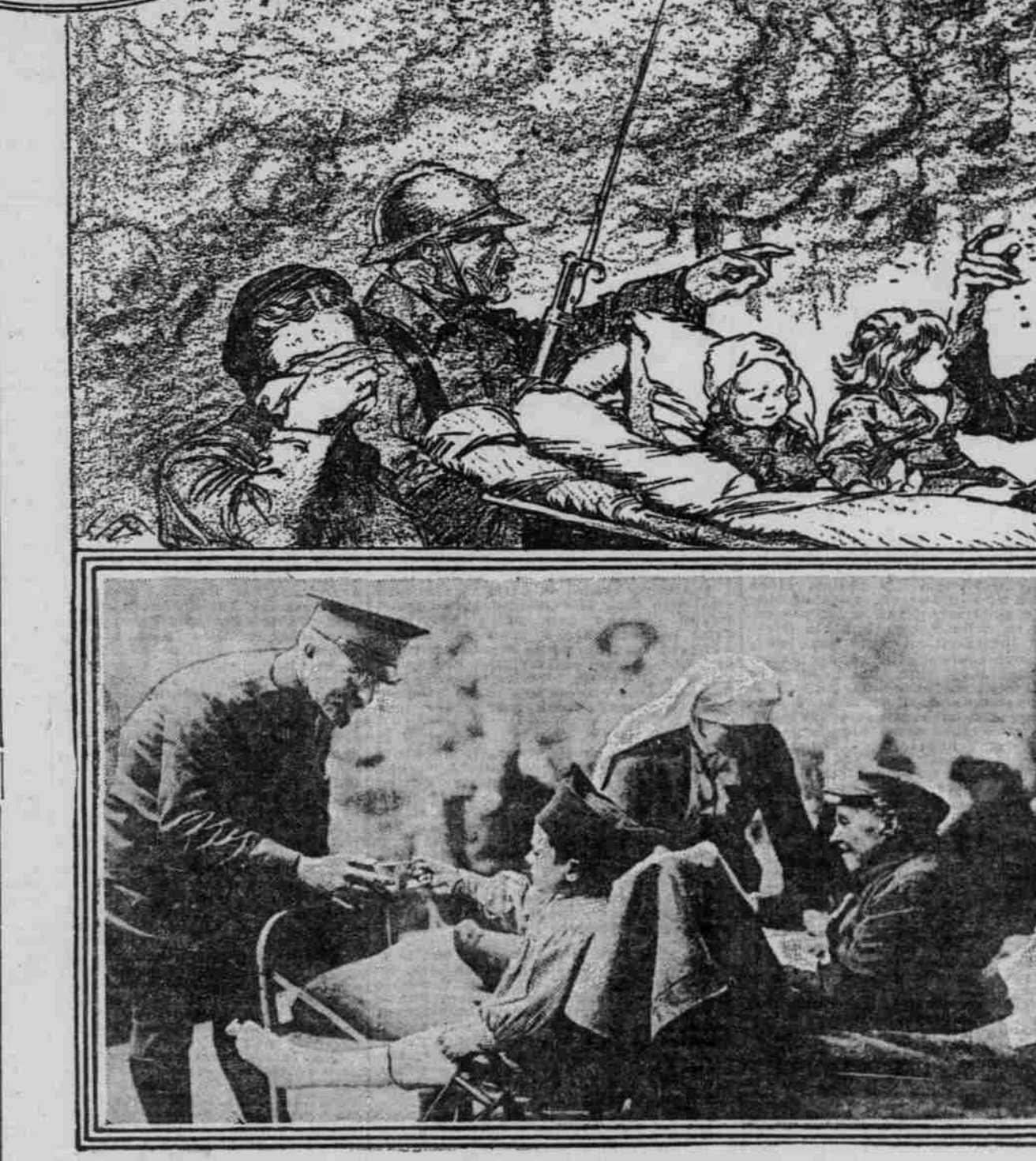
"Cheerful refugees" is, then, going a bit strong. But it is fair to say that the French refugees of 1918 know what hope is. And that is all important, for one must not think of the refugee as a "charity case" or an inferior person. "Where do we get the ticket for some bread?" asks one refugee. We in France are now so used to showing bread tickets and papers of this sort that it seems almost inconceivable that you can just file by the counter and take a seat at the long table and be served with all the bread and cheese or meat you want. Many a refugee from the Somme or the Oise, the Aisne or the Pas-de-Calais politely declines a second helping, announcing "J'ai assez d'ne, je vous remercie" in voice so grateful for the next-to-nothing received that the American that is waiting on him would almost rather have had no thanks at all. It would be less embarrassing. Certainly the forced evacuations represent a leveling force insofar as no one is exempt now from war's suffering and deprivation. At the Gare du Nord one has seen side by side at the oilcloth table, waiting their turn of coffee and bread, a meat, the prosperous old man, with the fur collar and funds in bank at the Credit Lyonnais, the little orphan girl with the nun who has brought them from the evacuated convent school and the young mother from Rouen, whom one knows at a glance to be the wife of some self-respecting workman, to say nothing of the little old lady whose bediamonded ears send rays of cold light either and you as she turns her nervous head and thanks the Americans for the first food she has crunched since yesterday morning. But lines of social demarcation are never so sharply drawn as in the dog family. Thus it is that I for one am almost awed by the almost chummy tolerance of thoroughbred pup and shivering mongrel brought down from the same firing line by the dog himself.

For them to live in. A good many of them are truck gardeners, and when I promised to help them establish little gardens and to give them seeds and tools, they were delighted. The only complication is that, whereas if they are scattered broadcast they will not have to pay any rent, if they keep together this way some must guarantee their rent for the first six months. I am hoping that the Red Cross will approve of my guaranteeing their rent for the first six months. I like the idea of treating the people of Peronne as a unit. You know that Peronne is a town that has been decorated for bravery and these people have brought the insignia down here with them. The Mayor is now at the head of the town, and he has been able to do for his people, and has insisted on decorating me with the 'Arms of Peronne,' so now I am a full-fledged citizen.

It isn't enough to feed hungry people—one must think of the future. What will happen in the war-raked country of the Somme at the end of the war? How will that region, one of the richest agriculturally as well as industrially in all France, come back to fullness of economic life? These are questions to interest France and also the ally of France which, perhaps, brings most of sentiment and understanding to the polka nation. For my part I think that Peronne will become the old Peronne just that much quicker if Doctor Boulanger, the Mayor, continues to stand by his people, and if the American Red Cross makes it possible for them to maintain the family and the community life.

America's Part in It.
If you were to sum up, what has America's part been in the recent movement of 30,000 civilians from the firing line, making room for a good many times that number of fighting men?

All over France our Red Cross has been aiding to the best of its ability—aiding by its canons and camoufettes, its physicians and nurses, its existing or emergency canteens and by its aid in furnishing canteens, its merely human helplessness at railway stations or emergency barracks. Clothing, bedding and food have been rushed to railway junctions where the need was most immediate and have been distributed by French and American workers. Money has been appropriated to provide 2000 meals at each of 10 railway stations, and the French—if one may judge by press comments and by the opinions of every sort—are really impressed by our compatriots' readiness to lend a hand. Said the Petit Parisien of work done at one of the Paris stations: "The repre-



Youth and Old Age Represented by the Refugees in the Foreground—"The Cup of Cold Water" and the American Red Cross Physician.

sentative of the A. R. C. would not let these unfortunate people leave the station till they could say, 'We have need of nothing more.' When the refugees reached the peaceful towns of Southern and Western France, to which their government directed them, they found other Americans waiting to help them.

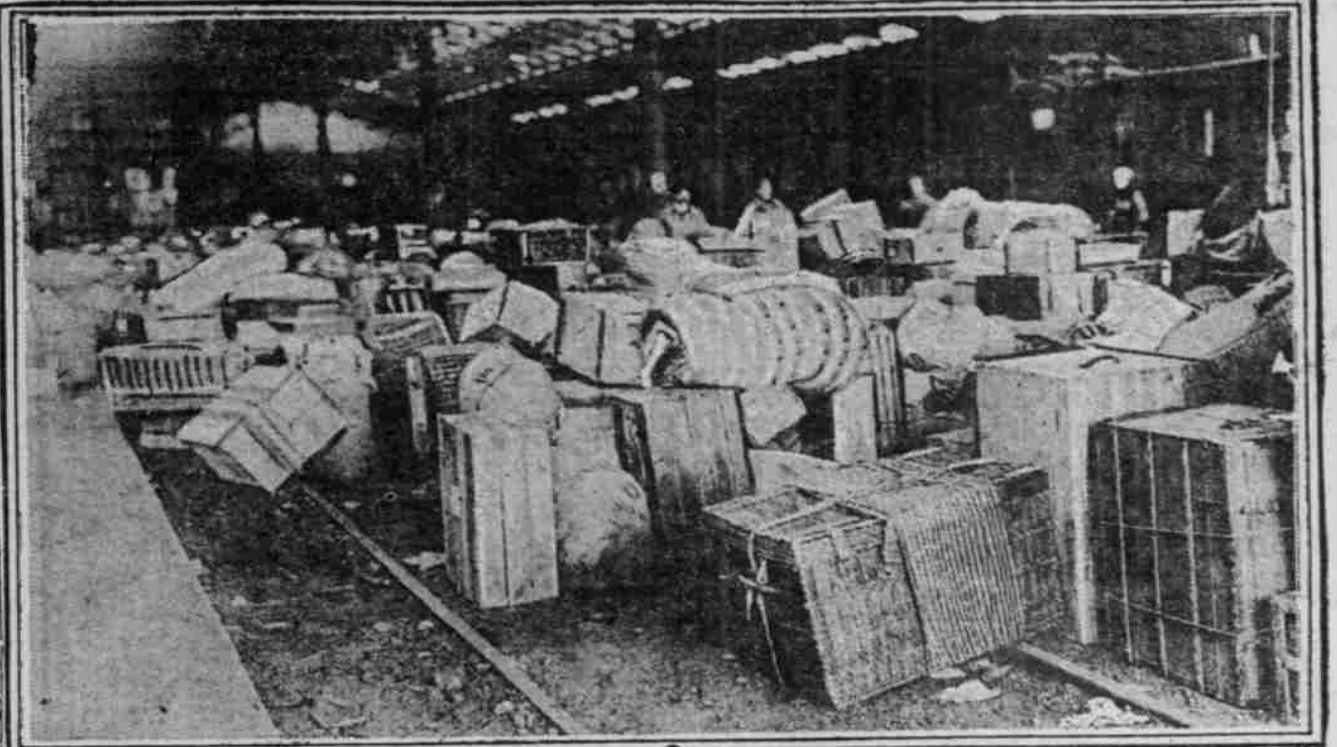
Old-Fashioned Jet Brooch Replaces Crepe.

American Women Join in Move to Discard Mourning Garments.

NOW that almost all American women are joining in the movement to help win the war by banishing from the streets the depressing sight of crepe and deep mourning garments, the need is felt for some expressive symbol that shall be the privilege of the country of the Sons and the daughters of the war or through other causes. It has been universally acknowledged that courage is as important these days as money or other material means of help; and high courage and deep mourning do not go together, either in the hearts of the bereaved, or in the hearts of those facing the imminent possibility of bereavement. All colors—or almost all—worn this season are soft and neutral in tone, and all styles are exceedingly simple, so the brave and true-hearted woman who sacrifices personal prejudices for the good of the greater number, and gives up mourning, even though it be a comfort to her own spirit, need not feel herself unduly conspicuous in dress. But every woman who feels it a sacrifice to give up her mourning apparel would appreciate some distinguishing symbol of the wearing of which would satisfy her own heart.

When the question was being discussed the other day in a room full of women, knitting for the Red Cross, one sweet-faced little woman pointed to a beautiful, old-fashioned jet brooch at her throat. "This," said she, "is my mourning." It is a treasured family heirloom full of dear associations. The members of our family do not believe in mourning apparel, but this brooch represents to me, mourning. It is never worn except at such periods, and is then worn constantly—with all costumes. When I wear this brooch, I am in mourning as truly as though clothed in deepest black."

The idea seems a very beautiful one which may well be passed on. In every family there is some piece of jewelry of this sort beloved because of association with those who have gone before and worthy of being the special



This Luggage Belongs to the Luckier Refugees—Lots of Them Could Save Nothing but the Clothes They Wore.



Members of the American Society of Friends have been especially useful in accompanying those of them who needed to be personally guided to the temporary refugee homes for when you are evacuating old ladies' homes and insane asylums guides are really not a luxury. Arriving in their new homes,

the refugees are housed in schools, town halls and other public buildings, to which the Americans have shipped thousands of blankets, sheets and mattress covers, to say nothing of clothing for those who left at five minutes' notice with no garments except those which they wore. Soup kitchens already

established by private charity in many towns have been subsidized or stocked with food by the Americans.

Our Americans in France have translated into words which are the same in all languages the message of good will and of service—the message that America has arrived.

one has known something of the more intimate aspects of Russian existence.

Look out for Her.

Atlantic.

He sat propped up in his bed.

For the nurse had led me there.

To this little room apart.

Left to her special care.

Where a soldier was about.

Almost smiling, to "go out."

By his bed two women sat.

Poor, and trying not to show.

What they knew. One was his wife.

I drew near and, speaking low.

Offered some poor humble word

Of human friendship. And he heard.

His impassive gentle face.

Showed a clean life, a pure heart.

He was one of those who leave

Love behind them when they start

Off to "join the regiment."

Yet with duty are content.

Then I dared: "Some cigarettes—"

You will smoke them after a while."

Never can my eyes forget

The salt sweetness of the smile

He turned slowly on his side.

He had no need to beguile

The last moments of his life.

With a humor truly French:

"Very soon I shall be dead—"

Does one smoke when one lies under—

Or in Paradise—I wonder?"

It's Patriotic to Protect Birds.

The People's Home Journal.

The work done by birds in saving food by destroying injurious insects and weed seeds is almost unbelievable, but the figures given here are vouched for by scientists. For instance, a scarletanager ate 630 gypsy-moth caterpillars in 18 minutes, which is at the rate of 2100 an hour.

The quail most hunted of birds, has no bad habits and eats 145 species of insects in Summer and 129 kinds of harmful weed seeds in Winter.

A flicker was found to have eaten 1000 chinch bugs; a night hawk, 600 grasshoppers; a Maryland yellow throat 3500 plant lice in 40 minutes.

The stomach of a cedar waxing contained 100 canker worms; a snow bunting was found to have eaten 1000 pigeon weed seeds; a Bob White made a meal on 5000 seeds of the same plant.

Professor Beale estimated that in Iowa the tree sparrow eats 375 tons of weed seeds every year.

The robin, the flicker, the thrush, all

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