

# Company Cut Hay for Grandmother, But the Old Lady Could Not Understand Why Should Want Milk to Drink

BY FRANK J. TAYLOR  
(United Press Staff Correspondent.)  
WITH THE AMERICAN FORCES  
IN FRANCE—(By Mail)—She was a little and stooped-over woman, somebody's grandmother.

With rather feeble strokes, but strong ones considering her age, she was cutting hay with a scythe in a field where you could hear the guns rumbling. She would swing a few strokes and then pause for breath.

The amount of hay already cut was far from encouraging, compared to the uncut waves of it. But she kept bravely on, cutting and resting, cutting and resting, and making the most of the situation.

He was a doughboy from a middle western state, a farmer lad whose temporary profession was shipping the Germans. His company was on rest, and he had a few days of comparative liberty. He used his spare hours to "hike" along the fields. He said "it took him back to the homestead" to be where hay and grain were growing.

He saw the old French woman cutting hay, in one of his travels, and his impulse was to jump over the fence and offer his services. His forethought was to keep on the road, because his French vocabulary did not include the word "hay" nor "scythe" nor enough grammar to concoct the sentence, "May I help you by cutting some hay?"

His impulse won, and he hopped over the fence to present his freckled honest self before the French woman. Taking the scythe from her hands, he said, pointing to himself, "Me cut hay. Me tree strong farmer boy."

Will you—French had. He doubted up his fist and clenched his elbow to prove the latter.

Evidently his French misled her, for the old farmwife protested, thinking he wanted to borrow or confiscate her scythe. It was her only one, she explained. More French made the situation more of a dilemma.

A doughboy soon learns on the French front that once you get into a scrape, the best way out of it is to use action, not words. This doughboy had learned already and he began cutting hay with wide swinging strokes.

The old Frenchwoman's apprehensions turned to joy and admiration.

"Vous êtes un bon garçon," she repeated, following him, and if the words meant nothing to him, the tone of her toothless lips meant much.

Down the field they went, the doughboy cutting and the old woman following, carrying on a conversation in French, to which he always replied, "Oui, oui." He knew that much French.

Near a tiny house on the edge of the village and at the end of the field, she

stopped him. "Wait a minute," she said in French, "until I get something to drink."

No Wine for Him. When she came out of the house with a glass and a bottle, he was half way down the field. She followed, and poured out a glass of wine.

He declined it with "Pas bon," two other words he knew.

The old woman was offended. "Not good," she said, "It is good wine and old. It is good."

He understood she was hurt, and

tried to make it clear he did not drink wine and did not want it. She insisted he take it.

You cannot do a kindness in France without having it returned, and this doughboy understood it. Yet he did not want the wine. Also he was not cutting hay while he was protesting.

Then he had an idea. "I haven't had a glass of milk to drink since I left home," he said. "That's 11 months. Give me a glass of milk, and I'll think I'm home again with this hay to cut."

"Comprenez pas," she said shrugging her shoulders.

Pointing Helps a Little. He understood the words with that shrug.

He pointed to a cow in the next pasture. "Milk, milk," he said. "You know milk."

She understood something and hurried into the house. Presently she came out with some cheese and bread, she beamed with the prospects of delighting this young American.

"Oui," he said real Frenchly, "but can't I have some milk?"

"Oui, oui, oui," she said, without understanding.

"Oh, you don't understand, I'll show you," he said.

He went to the house, she following dutifully. Taking a pail he sidled up to the cow, with "whoa, whoa, steady" and attempted to milk her. The cow did not understand, "whoa whoa, steady" and refused to be milked.

(Continued on Page 7.)

## YANKS GUARDING HUN WOUNDED



Here's another photograph taken when the Americans swept the crack Germans out of the Marne salient. It shows German prisoners lying a slightly wounded comrade from a gun pit, while Americans stand guard in the rear.

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