The Observer

MORO, OREGON.

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A Blue Mark here will answer an inquery, when entered upon our calendar, giving the date of the paper as the date at which your current subscription expires.

RABBITS HELP HOMESICKNESS

Play Important Role in Making Repatriates Contented in Strange Surroundings.

RED CROSS IS CHIEF AID

Cares for Friendless and Homeless People Whom Germany Dumps Back From the Captured French Hamlets.

Bourg, France.—All repatriates are homeless, but some have friends in France who take them in. Those who are friendless as well as homeless when Germany dumps them back from the captured French hamlet are sent, according to the plans of the ministry of the interior, so many to this department, so many to that; and the departments divide them among the villages, two families here, three there.

All over the west and south of France you find them, these people imbued with a love of their own firesides which the nomadic American can never understand, torn up suddenly by the roots and transplanted to an utterly strange community, without anything in the world but a little baggage they can carry and the franc and a half a day allowed by the French government. The father of the family is dead, or missing or a prisoner, or at the front. The daughters and the sons who could work are still in Germany. Those in France were sent back because they were too old, too weak or too young to work—useless mouths to the Germans. They are the repatriate problem in which our Red Cross is lending a hand.

Care for Repatriates.

The department of the Ain is typical. Bourg, its principal city, lies near enough to the Swiss border so that when six hundred people were expected, the Red Cross delegates could go to Evian and journey back with the convoys.

When the delegates met the repatriates on the train, they gave them an order which assured to each family a little of the coal which was so precious in France in cold weather. A printed letter stated that the Americans knew their sufferings and sympathized with them and would help supply them with garden tools and furniture and to get work for them.

Reducing housekeeping to its very lowest terms, the American Red Cross delegates decided that each family must have beds enough for everybody, a table, a chair apiece, a stove, something to hold water and something to cook in (there is a wonderful French utensil called a "fait-tout," in which you can pretty nearly make everything), a fork apiece, a plate apiece, and one knife for the family. These furnishings are lent to the poorer families. Those who can pay, buy furniture on a sublimated installment plan; $1.25 down and small payments according to income every two weeks until two-thirds of the cost price is reached, when the furniture becomes their own.

The delegates may be able to cure the physical needs of the refugees, but they have to contend always with the terrible homesickness of an uprooted people. More than anything else in the world, these homeless people want to return to their own firesides; and for the time being, that is tragically impossible. They must be made as contented as possible in their new communities. Furniture offers one means, gardens another, rabbits a third. Many of the people have been farmers on a small scale so that a few feet of ground on which to raise soup vegetables or potatoes makes them inordinately happy. The village furnishes the garden and the Red Cross supplies tools and often seeds.

Importance of the Rabbit.

But rabbits are the crowning glory. They represent almost the only form of meat these people ever have; they can be kept in very small quarters, fed on grass gathered by the children; and they multiply with pleasing rapidity. Where it seems that a rabbit will be specially appreciated, the delegate gives money enough to buy it to the mayor of the village and asks him to do the purchasing.

So it goes. Sometimes the gifts of a spade or a hoe or some wool or stockings; sometimes hundreds of kilos of potatoes sent to a mayor to distribute for the spring planting, dozens of blankets to cover the people when they first arrive and are housed of necessity in schoolhouses or town halls hastily converted into temporary barracks.

DOUSE SLACKER IN PAINT

Stands in Way of 100 Per Cent Red Cross Contribution and Fellow Workers Act.

Pittsburgh, Pa.—Andy Tomko, an Austrian, stood in the way of a 100 per cent contribution to the second Red Cross war fund by the Edgar Thompson Steel works employees. He would give nothing, he said. A delegation met him, took him by the heels and soused his head in a barrel of red paint; then they turned him around and put him in feet first. His "time" was given him minus a day's pay for the Red Cross and then he was discharged. The plant is a 100 per center.

The Awakening

By MINNIE M. TOWNSEND

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"'By, Myra, I'll be late for lunch, but if you get hungry don't wait. Molly won't mind warming mine over."

Myra, comfortably settled in the easiest chair of the sitting room, lazily waved a slim white hand to her mother's cheery good-by, and turning toward the window watched the lively little body cross the street and join several other dear mother people on the corner. Myra laughed scornfully.

"I'm surprised at mother; such a motley crowd, tall, short, fat, lean, rich and poor."

Myra, however, failed to take note of the one connecting link among the women. Each one carried a huge sewing bag and everyone from old Mrs. McCane's worn brown lining monstrosity to the wealthy Mrs. Van Eaton's creation of satin and ribbon was overflowing with its burden of brown and gray yarn and partially finished garments for Uncle Sam's soldier boys.

Myra yawned and turned lazily to a book in her lap, but somehow she could not get interested. A coming party was uppermost in her mind and she was having rosy visions of herself in the new satin gown which she had ordered just that morning. She was wondering if she could get slippers to match the delicate hue of her dress material, and if she had better have her hair done by a hair dresser or trust to her own nimble fingers to get just the correct amount of wave into the glossy strands of bronze. Pleasant reveries were interrupted by the insistent peal of the telephone bell.

Her eager greeting of her dearest chum was cut short in horrified dismay.

"Cut out the party? Surely, you must be mistaken, Dora—why I ordered my dress today. On account of the war? My soul. This old war makes me tired. I don't see what this country got into it for, anyhow. I wish to goodness I lived in a warless age . . . What's that—make comfort bags instead of dance? Well, of all the nonsense. No, I won't help. It makes me tired. No, I said, Dora. 'By."

Myra returned to her easy chair, pouting dreadfully. She caught up the book she had tried to read and flung it to a far corner of the library table. Her childish spite thus appeased, she slumped down into the luxuriant depths of the chair and sulked herself to sleep.

Her brother awakened her later by flinging the morning newspaper into her lap. Myra turned lazily to the woman's page and read the fashion talk first. Then she skimmed the lovelorn letters and read the next chapter in a thrilling serial of love and adventure. That digested, she turned in a bored fashion to the jokes.

One or two rather scandalous headlines caught her eye, but as far as the remainder of the paper was concerned it might jurt as well have been blank.

Her brother finally turned wistful eyes toward the feminine heap in the easy chair.

"Awful, isn't it?" he inquired glumly.

Myra surveyed him lazily. "What's awful, Bob?"

"Didn't you read the war news?" he asked sharply.

She grunted in disgust:

"I should say not; I hear enough of the old war. Why, just think, Bob, they've postponed our club party on account of the war, and I ordered my dress—"

"Myra!"

There was a new note in her brother's voice. She glanced up quickly, and the expression on his face made her get slowly to her feet, her eyes wide and questioning.

"Don't you dare talk like that," he continued, huskily. "An old party—and real men dying for their country and for right. Read that."

Mechanically she took the sheet he held out to her and glanced over it carelessly, as though a cursory look would reveal the cause of his perturbation. "Do you mean this, Bob? Why, it's only a list of the casualties," she said, reprovingly, as though such a list could be of no special interest to them.

"Only! Read 'em, I said."

Dumfounded, she read them down Suddenly she stiffened, peered closer at the printed sheet and then turned in a bewildered fashion to her brother.

"It can't be he, Rob; why, Bert was only a boy—just a boy—he can't be dead."

"It is true. He was only a boy, but he died for his country, while you—hate to give up an old party."

She did not heed the reproof. Staring at the familiar name, she was harking back over the year to their high school days. Albert Blake had graduated in her class, just barely acquiring the necessary points to let him pass out into the world with a diploma.

Back over the years she slipped. In the grammar grades he was a big, overgrown tease. Too silly to be really popular, he had laughed his way through the grades. The feminine portion of the school had always steered clear of him, as wherever a jolly, good-natured face shone there was always to be heard the squeal of a hair-pulled lass.

Myra's eyes were misty as she remembered the boy. Suddenly she brightened. Across memory's page was coming a long-forgotten incident. The one time when she had really admired the lad and forgot his much-befreckled countenance. She turned animatedly to her brother, anxious to tell him of this one worth-while thing Bert had done in her presence.

"Rob, Bert did have a brave nature, even though perhaps we didn't realize it at the time. I remember one beautiful summer day, when he and I were going home from school together. We were crossing a swampy field over a narrow path. Suddenly a nasty, little green snake reared its head just ahead of me in the path. Horrified, I squealed my loudest. Bert, who was chasing a butterfly just in back of me, hurried near to see what the trouble was. I suggested that we step aside and let the reptile go its way, but Bert emphatically said no, the younger children were coming just behind us and they, too, would come across the snake. Though I remonstrated, boldly he took heavy stones and crushed the menacing creature before the other children came along."

She paused reminiscently, and then, as if some sudden understanding had taken possession of her, her eyes widened and a new light came into their dark depths.

"Oh Rob, I never thought about it in that light before, but what Bert did that day was what he tried to do when he enlisted, wasn't it? It's just what all the soldier boys are trying to do—make this world safer for those who come after. I see it all now. Oh what a selfish creature I've been! Oh Rob, I—I—"

Sobbing, she turned shamed eyes to her brother, and he, boyishly caught her against his shoulder and patted her tousled head comfortingly. After she had quieted down a bit he arranged the chair pillows about her in a somewhat embarrassed fashion, and then stood before her eager eyes, asking the question which his parted lips were shyly refusing to do.

Myra sensed the situation immediately, as she looked up into his face. She sighed a bit woefully, but there was real bravery in her voice as she said wistfully:

"I know what you are aching to ask, Rob, seeing that I have been the objector until now."

"Until now—does that mean that you consent, Sis?"

She nodded, though it cost her a brave effort.

"Yes, I couldn't say otherwise now, Rob. Uncle Sam needs every young man, and—and Bert's place in the ranks is empty."

"Thank you, Sis, he does need us, every one, and I've wanted so much to answer the call. I know mother'll be glad."

An hour later, when Mrs. Crane entered the house, smiling happily with the thought of a morning well spent, a distinct odor of scorched potatoes crept up her nose. Hurrying into the kitchen through the sitting room, a surprising sight met her eyes.

Molly, supremely unconscious of burnt potatoes, was busily superintending the cutting out of a big red cross, while Myra's untrained fingers were clumsily following instructions. The boy, whistling happily, was gathering up the remains of tan silk, from which the dainty sewing bag, hanging across the chair arm, had been cut.

At a glance the mother knew that something unusual had happened, and burnt potatoes and everything else were forgotten until she heard the story of the casualty list and how it had awakened the heart of her daughter at last.

With her arms about her daughter, the mother's eyes looked over the bronze tresses and smiled bravely, proudly at her son, who was soon to be one of Uncle Sam's soldier boys.

WHEN PLINY VISITED BELGIUM

Great Roman Has Left Us an Interesting Description of Country as He Saw It.

Pliny, the learned and industrious Roman naturalist, who perished in the eruption of Vesuvius, 79 A. D., visited, in the course of his duties as an official of the Roman empire, the heroic country which we call Belgium. It is interesting, comments the Protectionist, to recall his description of this country.

"There," he wrote, "the ocean pours in its flood twice every day, and produces a perpetual uncertainty whether the country may be considered as a part of the continent, or of the sea. The wretched inhabitants take refuge on the sand hills or in little huts, which they construct on the summits of lofty stakes, whose elevation is conformable to that of the highest tides.

"When the sea rises they appear like navigators; when it retires they seem as though they had been shipwrecked. They subsist on the fish left by the refluent waters and which they catch in nets formed of rushes or seaweed. Neither tree nor shrub is visible on these shores. The drink of the people is rain water, which they preserve with great care; their fuel, a sort of turf, which they gather and form with the hands. And yet the unfortunate beings dare to complain against their fate when they fall under the power and are incorporated with the empire of Rome!"

Uses Fins, Not Wings.

The flying fish does not really fly, but raises itself from the water by means of its long fins. It can support itself in the air until they become dry, when it drops back into the sea.

Wood Oil in Commerce.

Wood oil has many uses. It is used as an illuminant, an ingredient in concrete, an adulterant in the manufacture of lacquer varnish, and when mixed with lime and bamboo shavings it is used by the Chinese in calking their boats. Chinese or Indian ink is made from the soot resulting from the burning of the oil or the fruit husks. The product is also used as a dressing for leather, in the manufacture of soap, and as a varnish for fine furniture. In foreign countries wood oil is chiefly used for the manufacture of varnish from cheap gums. Other oils require a higher and more expensive quality of gum in order that the resulting varnish be of equal grade. This feature, together with the rapidity with which wood oil varnish dries, has caused the demand for the product to increase steadily.

Schwab's Only Political Speech.

"I have only one political speech to my credit," says Charles M. Schwab in his article, "The Shipbuilder's Job," in the June Forum. "It was made over at Braddock thirty years ago when I was young and impulsive. I urged the election of the Republican ticket. As a consequence, or a fact, the town went Democratic for the first and only time, I believe, since the Civil war."

IS ANCIENT CUSTOM

No One Knows Who Originated the "Round Robin."

Long in Use on Shipboard for Determining Each Sailor's Watch—Often Employed in the Form of a Petition.

That watch kept on board ship at night, while lying at anchor, is called the anchor watch. Generally speaking it consists of one officer and one seaman, whose duties are to watch out for the safety of the ship, see that the anchor light is kept burning brightly, and take care that the vessel does not drag her anchor. If there are eight hours of darkness to be covered and eight men constitute the crew, these men are required to watch one hour each. If there be more or less men the question arises who is to go on watch first or last, or, perhaps, who is to "lay over" until the next day.

It thus becomes necessary to ascertain who is to go on duty at a certain hour and each man must know when his turn comes. Arrangement for this is made by forming a "round robin," or putting it in another way, by "chalking for watches," which is accomplished in such a way that each sailor has the time for keeping his watch determined by lot, one not being favored more than another. The thing is decided in this way:

One man draws a large circle on the lid of a chest, or, if that is not convenient, the deck. The circle is subdivided into as many divisions as there are men; and each man makes his mark in one of the spaces. This may be a cross, a circle, a triangle, or any other sign that will suffice to identify him.

During the time the sailors are placing their marks within the division of the circle, one of their number is detained outside on deck and kept in ignorance of the identity of any author of any mark. When all have made their marks the round robin is complete. The man who was on deck is now called, someone else having made a mark for him. This man now proceeds to erase the marks, one by one. The owners of the marks are numbered from number one up, in succession, as he erases them, and their numbers are chalked up on the sides of the berths; those above number ten lying over until the next night. As the man who erases the marks does not know who made this or that, he cannot show any partiality.

The round robin is sometimes put to other use when the crew of a vessel at sea wish to present a grievance in the form of a petition to the captain. Their complaint is made out in writing, and the signature put in the form of a round robin, which prevents the writer of the document from being singled out and treated, as a ringleader, with undue severity. A famous case in example of similar use of the round robin in the army within recent times was the "Roosevelt Round Robin" during the Spanish war.

Where the custom originated no one knows.

Spain Is Buying Pianos.

The American government is buying mules and blankets in Spain and paying for them with pianos made in the United States, according to George W. Pound, manager of the National Piano Manufacturers' association, in calling attention to one of the striking developments at the present time in this country's export trade.

"As is the case with neutrals generally," Mr. Pound said, "much of Spain's population has profited largely by the war, and the demand for pianos has persisted in spite of the fact that the prices of all musical instruments in Spain have doubled and trebled since the war began."

Mr. Pound said that the American manufacturers were thereby offered an unusual opportunity to help the government pay the war bills as well as to meet the foreign demand for our goods. In this connection, Mr. Pound said, piano manufacturers can only export their pianos through government license.

Gardens in Japan and China.

The garden, per se, in both Japan and China is most frequently to be found in the grounds of some public building or temple. The Chinese garden is as reversed to our eyes as their writing, for it consists chiefly of water. On a pool or pond they develop their wonderful aquatic plants, the lotus, lilies of myriad color and variety and brilliant foliage specimens. In addition to this the walks are sometimes bordered with flowering plants in pots or jardinieres, which are changed and shifted from time to time. Of these the favorites are such flowers as the peony and others which are believed to possess medicinal properties. But the essential of the Chinese gardener is to display his aquatic floriculture.

Something They Didn't Want.

Some of these numerous and vociferous folk who are always crying for justice may some day get it. Then what will they say?—Milwaukee News.

General Custer's War Horses.

Frog Town was one of General Custer's war horses. He was the finest specimen of the thoroughbred I ever saw, standing 16 hands, well balanced and of excellent proportions, writes a correspondent of the Washington Post. In motion he was superb, a perfect model for the sculptor's art. The favorite war horse of General Custer on the plains was a brown horse called Dandy. He was 15½ hands, a compact, muscular horse, fine head and neck. He marched in the ranks of Custer's little army of daring troopers on June 25, 1876, against the confederated Sioux tribes, that terrible day of the massacre of Custer and his men, in the Valley of Little Big Horn, and was shot through the shoulder. He lived, however, to return to Fort Lincoln, whence, after a partial recovery, he was sent to General Custer's father at Monroe, Mich.

AUNT BESS' TRUNK

By HERMINE K. TRASK.

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"Mother!"

"Yes, Laura?"

"Well, you know, mother, Roy Benton is coming home for a few days before going 'over there'."

"Is he? That is very nice, indeed," said Mrs. Nelson.

"Yes, it is."

Then, hesitatingly: "There is going to be a dance given in his honor. Do you suppose I could have a new dance frock? There are some very pretty patterns in ——'s window that are very reasonable in price."

"Laura, you know I would love to get you something, but—"

"But what?" impatiently from Laura.

"Why, there are the rent and the gas bill due Saturday," said her mother wearily, "and you know the funds are low. Perhaps you could find something suitable in the trunk Aunt Bess left you."

"Oh, that trunk!" snapped Laura angrily. "I wish Aunt Bess had never willed it to me." Then she left her mother and went to her room.

Laura's father had been a carpenter and had kept his wife and daughter in comfortable circumstances, but when Laura was fourteen years old he died of pneumonia after a short illness of four days. Mrs. Nelson was a clever seamstress, and by careful planning and strict economy had managed to support herself and Laura.

Among the many friends was Roy Benton, the only son of the village docton

In her room Laura cried resentfully until her eyes were red and swollen. Indeed, she did not wish to be seen by Roy at that moment. After she had calmed down she thought of how hard her mother had worked for her, and decided to take her advice and look through Aunt Bess' trunk.

There were many dresses which probably had been very fashionable in their day, but there was nothing that was suitable for evening wear. At the very bottom of the trunk, however, there was a white voile dress.

"It is pretty," murmured Laura to herself, "and I am going to try it on."

About ten minutes later she ran into the sitting room, where her mother sat knitting on an olive-drab sweater. Her cheeks were aglow with excitement, and, dressed in the dress of the nineteenth century, she certainly looked like a picture.

"Laura Nelson!" gasped her mother.

"Isn't it pretty, mother dear?"

"Yes, Laura, it is. That dress was always very dear to Aunt Bess. She had worn it the night before Robert Kingston, her soldier sweetheart, went off to join the boys in blue in 1861. She was to have married him but he fell at Gettysburg. That is why she never married."

"Oh, mother," said Laura, "do you suppose it would have the same effect on—?"

"On Roy Benton?" queried her mother.

Laura blushed prettily, and said: "At any rate I am going to launder it. I may wear it to the dance, too."

Although the dress was pretty before it was laundered, it was much prettier afterward, and Laura made up her mind to wear it, just to see what the crowd would say!

Thursday night.

Laura went to the dance hall alone; and a little later than the other girls, for she wanted to see what the general impression of her old-fashioned dress on all who were there would be. She removed her wraps in the dressing room, brushed her pretty curls back from her forehead, threw a pale pink scarf over her shoulders, arranged her flowers in her belt, and went into the dance hall.

The boys and girls were all talking at once, asking this, that, and the other of Roy Benton, but never waiting for a reply.

As soon as Laura made her appearance, the hubbub ceased. All eyes were upon her, filled with admiration and surprise.

Roy broke the silence by walking up to Laura, slipping her hand through his arm, and turning to his friends said: "Friends, meet Miss 1861." They all broke into a laugh, and as the orchestra began to play at that moment, Laura and Roy had the first dance together. Not only the first, but many after, including the last waltz, after which they strolled to her home under the light of the pale moon.

"Excuse me for asking, Laurie," said Roy, using the old name he had called her in days gone by, "but where did you get that dress?"

"Laura told him about the trunk Aunt Bess had left her, and then asked: "Why?"

"Why I don't know. You look so different from the rest of the girls. Sweeter somehow. Oh, Laurie, I've got five days more. Will you—? Couldn't we—? Oh, hang it all, I love you. Will you marry me before I go away?"

* * * * * * *

Before Laura went to bed that night she had a little chat with a picture of Aunt Bess. If you had been near you would have heard her say: "I'm sorry for what I said about your trunk that other day. I am really glad you left it to me, instead of sorry. And dear Aunt Bess, I am sorry too that your sweetheart was killed. I must go to bed now, or mother will call me a sleepy-head and tell me my eyes look like two holes burned in a blanket. Good night, Aunt Bess, and thank you for the trunk."

Taking a Nap.

Nan was sitting on one of the smallest first-grade chairs with her legs crossed. After a while she extended them gingerly and exclaimed to the teacher: "Oh, my feet have gone to bed."

Duty.

Duty, be it a small matter or a great, is duty still, the command of heaven, the eldest voice of God. And it is only they who are faithful in a few things, who will be faithful over many things.—Charles Kingsley.

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