

The Eleventh Hour

A Dramatic Description of the Final Scens of the Great War.

The following account of the last hour before the armistice went into effect at 11 a. m., November 11th, and the celebration that followed the cessation of fighting was printed in The Stars and Stripes of November 15. (The Stars and Stripes is the official newspaper published for the American Expeditionary Forces in France). The article was sent to Mrs. J. H. Levy by her son, Lieut. Geo. D. Levy, with the interesting letter, which is printed herewith:

"At the eleventh hour on the eleventh day of the eleventh month hostilities came to an end from Switzerland to the sea. Early that morning, from the wireless station on the Eiffel Tower in Paris, there had gone forth, through the air to the wondering, half-incredulous line that the Americans held from near Sedan to the Moselle the order from Marshal Foch to cease firing on the stroke of 11.

On the stroke of 11 the cannon stopped, the rifles dropped from shoulders, the machine guns grew still. There followed then a strange, unbelievable silence as though the world had died. It lasted but a moment, lasted for the space that a breath is held. Then came such an uproar of relief and jubilation, such a tooting of horns, shrieking of whistles, such an outburst from the bands and trains and church bells, such a shouting of voices as the earth is not likely to hear again in our day and generation.

When night fell on the battlefield the clamor of the celebration waxed rather than waned. Darkness? There was none. Rockets and ceaseless fountain of star shells made the lines a streak of glorious brilliance across the face of startled France, while, by the light of flares, the front and all its dancing, boasting, singing peoples was clearly visible as though the sun sat high in the heavens.

The man from Mars, coming to earth on the morning of November 11, 1918, would have been hard put to it to say which army had won, for, if anything, the greater celebration, the more startling outburst, came not from the American but from the German side. At least he could have said—that man from Mars—to which side the suspension of hostilities had come as the greater relief.

The news began to spread across the front shortly after the sun rose. There was more or less of an effort to send it forward only through military channels, to have the corps report it calmly by wire to the divisions, the divisions to the brigades, the brigades to the regiments, the regiments to the battalions, and so on down to the uttermost squad, quite as though this were an ordinary order and nothing to get excited about. There was the effort. But it did not work very well. The word was sped on the kind of wireless that man knew many centuries before

Marconi came on earth. It spread like a current of electricity along the shivery mess lines, hopping up and down and sniffing and scuffling as they waited for the morning coffee. It spread along the chains of singing road menders, along the creeping columns of camions. Driver called it to driver and runners tossed the word over their shoulders as they hurried. Now and again a fleet of motorcycles would whizz along through the heavy mist.

"The guerre will be finee at 11 o'clock. Finee la guerre."

You could hear it called out again and again.

"What time?"

"Eleven o'clock."

A pause.

"Say, you, what time is it now?"

"They took it a little incredulously at first. That was old stuff, that rumor. They had heard it again and again during the past fortnight.

"Well, the captain says it's so."

"Hell, who's he? I'll wait till Foch comes and tells me himself."

Why, the preceding Thursday night—that was the night the envoys came over from Spa—news that what the doughboy seems to prefer calling the "arstemic" had been signed spread like the Spanish flu from Grandpre to the Meuse.

That night the flares inflamed the skies, the rockets streaked the night. Bands burst into long-suppressed music, and the headlights twinkled all along the road. It did not last long, this little unbidden, furry, and there was much scolding; but, as a matter of fact, nothing much more demoralizing to the enemy could well have been staged than this spectacle of the First American Army celebrating something he had not heard.

All along the 77 miles held by the Americans the firing continued, literally, unto the eleventh hour. At one minute before 11, when a million eyes were glued to the slow-creeping minute hands of a million watches, the roar of the guns was a thing to make the old earth tremble. At one point—it was where the Yankee division was visiting at the time, with a French corps was having a brisk morning battle to the east of the Meuse, a man stationed at one battery stood with a handkerchief in his uplifted hand, his eyes fixed on his watch. It was one minute before 11. To the lanyards of the four big guns ropes were tied, each rope manned by 200 soldiers, cooks, stragglers, messengers, gunners, everybody. At 11 the handkerchief fell, the men pulled, the guns cursed out he last shot of the battery. And so it went at a hundred, at a thousand, places along the line.

Probably the hardest fighting being done by any Americans in the final hour was that which engaged the troops of the 28th, 92nd, 31st and 7th Divisions with the Second American Army, who launched a fire-eating attack above Vigneulles just at dawn on the 11th. It was no mild thing, that last flare of the battle, and the order to cease firing did not reach the men in the front line until the last moment, when runners sped with it from fox hole to fox hole.

Then a quite startling thing occurred. The skyline of the crest ahead of them grew suddenly populous with dancing soldiers and, down the slope, all the way to the barbed wire, straight for the Americans, came the German troops. They came with outstretched hands, ear-to-ear grins and souvenirs to swap for cigarettes, so well did they know the little weakness of their foe. They came to tell how pleased they were the fight had stopped, how glad they were the Kaiser had departed for parts unknown, how fine it was to know they would have a republic at last in Germany.

"No," said one stubborn little Prussian, "it's a kingdom we want."

Whereat his own companions mobbed him and howled him down.

The farthest north at 11 o'clock on the front of the two armies was held at the extreme American left up Sedan way by the troops of the 77th Division. The farthest east—the nearest to the Rhine—was held by those negro soldiers who used to make up the old New York 15th and have long been brigaded with the French. They were in Alsace and their line ran through Thann and across the railway that leads to Colmar.

When the great hour came, across the trenches from our side swarmed a small army of civilians bearing food and clothing to their kith and kin on the other side. From the highest steeple in Thann the tricolor fluttered gayly, and within the church, there knelt in thanksgiving all the old folks from miles around.

With them, in among them, poilus knelt and Yankee soldiers, and the crowd so choked the aisles and steps that the priest could not move forward for his services. But the words that he preached from the pulpit were such words as leave the eyes dim and the heart glowing.

Up to the front, past Montfaucon and Romagne, past Remonville and on up a truck trundled that morning. Over the tailboard, at the endless mud of Argonne and Ardennes, there gazed a boy who had been drafted in the heart of America some six months before and who, with stop-offs for tedious training on the way, had slowly journeyed from his home to the Ardennes. It had taken him six months, it had put him through the cheerless channel of the replacement system, but it had brought him at last to his destination—the destination of his daydreams and his nightmares. He had reached the front.

As he rode along he noticed a certain excitement tingling everywhere, but perhaps that was just the mood of the front. When finally the truck stopped and he jumped out, the news was waiting for him.

"It is 11 o'clock. The war is over."

"Hell," he said. "I just got here."

Then he laughed a short, little laugh that was made half of relief and half of disappointment! And his name was Private George W. Legion.

Up in a high observation post an American observer was trying to penetrate the mist with his German field glasses. The young officer at his elbow asked him to look due west. What did he see? Well, not much—the road to the forest full of traffic, no shell fire, a crippled airplane in the field below.

"Lord, Lord, what good are those glasses? Why, without them, I can

see a little house in Kansas City. There's a nurse on the second floor and the sun, shining in the window, just touches a cradle there. Inside that cradle, man, is my daughter. I have never seen her before. She was born since I sailed for France."

Meanwhile, on the roads below, the Engineers were working with a will. No time to celebrate, for the roads must be kept in shape. But they sang as they worked.

Send the word, send the word over there

That the Yanks are coming, the Yanks are coming—

The words, in that hour, had acquired a new significance. While here and there across the devastated land where Yanks were at work, you could hear a knot burst into song. And the burden of all the songs was this:

It's home boys, home, it's home we ought to be,

Home, boys, home in the land of liberty.

So came to an end the 11th of November, 1918—the 555th day since America entered the war.

November 13th, 1918.

My Dear Mother:

Thank God the war is over. For the first time in nine days I have been able to write you a line. During that time I have thought of you constantly, and prayed that I might live to see you again, for I certainly lived through a veritable hell. I am safe, and sound now, and it will not be many months before I come back to you.

Now, I can tell you the whole truth about what I have been doing. From the day I left Comissey I have either been at the front or on my way to a new front. For three weeks I was in command of a combat group on the front line, in the Vosges sector, and for one month I never took off my clothes, not even my shoes, except once, when I had a chance to take a bath. We then had ten days rest and then went to the Verdun front, where we stayed but a few days and were hurriedly sent to another sector of the same front for an attack. We marched out for that attack before noon on the 10th. From the minute we started on the road, we came under terrific shell fire, which increased as we advanced.

A little after ten o'clock, we were going "over the top," with the enemy sending down a rain of high explosives and gas shells and using aeroplanes against us.

Our men were wonderfully brave throughout that hell of fire, and shell. Machine gun fire was incessant, gas came over at frequent intervals, and we had to put on our masks, but still the boys went on. Maj. Willis was right in the thick of it, and as his adjutant I was with him to send and receive messages, and help keep up communications. For twelve hours the show kept up with ever increasing intensity, until finally orders came to withdraw from that point, in order to join in an attack on the left. In leaving the danger was increased twofold, but we were early the following morning in time to see the first and second battalions move out for the attack, while we were held back in muddy trenches as support. When we were about in the act of moving out again for a second dose an order came at 10.15 that firing would cease at 11 o'clock. You can imagine how I felt! I had been without without sleep for nearly four days, and four nights! I had been living under the highest kind of tension during that time, and had little or no food.

When I thought of what I had lived through, and how wonderful my escape from death had been, I there, and then offered up a prayer of thanks to God for my safe deliverance. I will soon be able to tell you of my many experiences. . . .

Orders have just come for us to move out. I suppose that we are to occupy some territory under the terms of the armistice, so I must close. I will write again at the first opportunity, and will cable you if possible. With unbounded love I am able.

Your devoted son,

George.

Americans in Prison

Y. M. C. A. Worker in Germany Did Much for Their Comfort.

Paris, Nov. 15 (Correspondence of the Associated Press)—The condition of American war prisoners in German prison camps was to some extent ameliorated by the work of Conrad Hoffman an American Y. M. C. A. worker who was permitted to remain in Berlin after most other Americans either had left or had been interned.

Hoffman convinced the German government that the more he was allowed to do for the American prisoners in Germany the better would fare German prisoners in American hands. He was allowed to employ neutrals as his assistants on his promise that members of his organization would not act as spies or propagandists, but solely to improve the physical and mental welfare of the prisoners.

Largely through Hoffman's efforts, it is now stated, prisoner's help committees were organized in all prison camps in Germany containing Americans and their needs were communicated to Mr. Hoffman who forwarded them to A. C. Harte, international Y. M. C. A. secretary in Berne, Switzerland.

Both the Red Cross and the Y. M. C. A. cooperated in supplying the prisoners with food, clothing, money and other necessities, operating through that channel. Many letters have been received at Y. M. C. A. headquarters in Paris from the American prisoners of war in Germany testifying to the receipt of this aid.

THE UNITED STATES SCHOOL GARDEN ARMY

Frank M. Harper, who for the past eleven years has been the superintendent of the Raleigh, N. C., public schools was in the city for a few days recently. He is now with the Bureau of Education at Washington, and is organizing in the cities and larger towns of North and South Carolina companies of the United States School Army.

The purpose of this organization is to enlist the services of the public school children in the high schools and upper grammar grades in the cultivation of home gardens and vacant lots under teacher direction for twelve months in the year. Eighty-five per cent. of these children in normal times are without employment after school hours. The government, in order to increase food production at home, and thereby releasing more food for shipment to the needy peoples of Europe, is making an effort to utilize the school children of America in cultivating home gardens for family consumption.

The plan is for the superintendent of schools to select some grade teacher who has a natural aptitude for gardening and, by additional compensation of \$200.00 a year, to secure her services for supervising these home gardens during afternoon hours and vacation months. Boards of Education are urged by the authorities at Washington to employ one or more grade teachers in every town and city to carry on this work. Each grade teacher to receive \$10 a month during the school term and \$40 a month during the vacation period.

A company consists of from 20 to 150 children under one teacher director. From the company are selected a captain, a first lieutenant and a second lieutenant, and it will be the duty of these three officers to assist the teacher-director in visiting the gardens of the children and aiding them with suggestions when possible. A bronze badge is presented to every member as soon as his garden is planted. The captain's badge has three stars, the first lieutenant's badge two and the second lieutenant's badge one. A service flag is also given for display in the window of the home.

The government estimates that each member of this school garden army will average \$12.50 worth of vegetables for the family. By multiplying 150 by \$12.50 we can get some idea as to the value to the community of organizing the work in the public schools.

Aside from its economic value, gardening has a high educational value. It is a phase of manual training, and teaches boys and girls the much needed use of their hands. The pupil who cultivates a garden meets with obstacles such as drought, frost, harmful insect blight, neighbors' chickens, etc. To overcome such obstacles and successfully raise vegetables and flowers is almost a liberal education. It is nature study of the most valuable kind.

Boards of Education are readily cooperating with the government in appropriating funds for the employment of one or more teacher-directors to carry on this work. Bulletins are sent out at intervals and other directions so that all needed information is placed in the hands of the teacher, who gives it to the children.

The school board of Columbia has recently employed six teacher-directors. The Chester school board has employed one. The training school of Winthrop College one. The matter will be presented to the Rock Hill board at their next meeting and favorable action will probably be taken.

Over one million and a half boys and girls have already joined the United States School Garden Army, and the government is making a drive for five millions by spring.

Food experts are of the opinion that America's food supply will be taxed to the utmost during the year that is approaching. It is not generally known that neither North Carolina or South Carolina raise sufficient food to feed the people in these two States. This army affords a wonderful opportunity for the boys and girls to be patriotic and to gain health and happiness in the cultivation of plants and flowers. Habits of thrift, patriotism and industry are thus inculcated, while the family grocery bill will be materially reduced.

It is suggested that a garden fair be held on the 4th day of July in all the cities and towns where there is a division of the garden army, and prizes be offered for excellence along the different lines of garden work. This it is believed, would add greatly to the interest of the young gardeners.

Children who are taught to grow plants and flowers while attending the public schools will imbibe not only pleasure but also a sense of beauty that will be revealed in later years in more attractive homes. The boys in France are impressed with the skill of even the peasants in France as displayed in their homes. Flowers and shrubbery and climbing vines are familiar every-day scenes in the homes of the small farmers in France. Our American boys are also impressed with the fact that there is no waste land in France; the whole country, not over-run by the enemy, is in the highest state of cultivation. Before the great war, France was the banker nation of Europe on account of its wonderful agricultural development. The nation that contains the greatest number of successful farmers and highly cultivated fields will become the wealthiest nation. Surely, therefore, a knowledge of elementary agriculture should be taught to the young people now attending the American public schools. United States School Commissioner Claxton has for a number of years advocated the teaching of gardening in the public schools under teacher direction, and the proper place for the garden is at the home of the child.

Look Out for Damaged Cotton.

We cannot refrain from giving a word of advice to those of our friends who are holding cotton. In riding through the country it is to be seen thrown around the yard under trees or in some cases piled three or four bales high. The average farmer will tell you that by turning his cotton over after a rain so as to allow the sun to dry it there is no danger of damage. In this statement we think our friends are mistaken. With sugar sack bagging especially, the moisture gets under the bagging and the sun can't get at it to dry it thoroughly and damage is bound to result. We have had a great deal of experience with damaged cotton, all of which has been very unsatisfactory. We have known cotton to damage as much as 150 pounds to the bale and figuring around the present price, that means \$40 per bale. It is our candid opinion that any cotton exposed to the weather at this season of year for four to six months, no matter how careful the owner may be in turning, it will be damaged from ten to twenty pounds to the bale.

Another trouble in this connection is the expense of picking it. This work is usually done at the public weighers' platform before the cotton is weighed and the cost will be double what it has been heretofore. In some cases it may be necessary for the owner to carry the cotton home on account of the scarcity of labor, and have it picked before he can sell it. Our advice is warehouse your cotton no matter what the cost may be and if you can't find a place in which to store it, build sheds to protect it from the weather. It is strange that people will go to so much trouble and expense to raise cotton and then throw it around any old way to be damaged by the elements.

Another thing, insure your cotton, you can't afford to be without it.

We are not charging anything for this advice, and the farmer who fails to act upon it will only have himself to blame, when he comes in to sell his cotton in the spring or early summer at 30 to 35c, which we hope he will obtain for it, and finds a lot of it damaged.

With best wishes for a happy and pleasant Christmas.

O'DONNELL & CO.

During Red Cross Christmas Roll Call.

There are those who when called upon to renew their subscription to the Red Cross for 1919 will wonder, as they were told last May that they would not be called upon for membership dues until next May.

This Red Cross Christmas Roll Call is a universal campaign for members instituted at National Headquarters.

By renewing your membership now you will simply be paying dues in advance, paying in December for 1919 instead of in May, hence making one payment for the year and will not be called upon next May. We trust that every Red Cross member will exhibit a spirit of cooperation and gladly pay his dollar now without question.

Helpful Herbert.

What a friend we have in Hoover. All the skins and thieves to bare. What a surplus-fat remover. All our hungry pangs to share. Ever present help in trouble. Guide, philosopher, and friend. Pass the shark-meat and fried stubble. Will the conflict ever end? —Credited to "Exchange" by American Motherhood.

FOR INFORMATION OF RED CROSS MEMBERS.



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HEADQUARTERS FOR YOUR CHRISTMAS GIFTS

For many years we have been headquarters for Men's and Boys' Christmas gifts. This season we are prepared, as usual, to satisfy your wants.

- Suits,
- Overcoats,
- Raincoats,
- Hats,
- Shoes,
- Shirts,
- Underwear,
- Bathrobes,
- Smoking Jackets,
- Handbags,
- Suit Cases,
- Handkerchiefs,
- Gloves,
- Hosiery,
- Neckties,
- Collars,
- Collar Bags,
- Mufflers, and other Useful Gifts.
- Ties, in boxes, 50c.

Don't wait until all the Best Ones have gone, come in at once.

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The Home of Hart Schaffner & Marx Clothes