

HER TABLE IS SPREAD FOR MEN IN THE RANKS

Desolated French Mother Finds Solace in Stuffing Boys of A.E.F. with Goodies that Smack of Home Cooking

This is the story of a little, gentle-voiced, old Frenchwoman, who runs the best restaurant in France—or so its patrons think, at least. There are, or have been in times past, restaurants aplenty for officers only, but here is a place most jealously guarded for enlisted men, privates preferred. Not that a colonel cannot get his dinner there, but it will not be so cheap nor so abundant nor so quickly served, for Madame Cocaud cooks for the love of the thing and her heart is with the boys in the ranks.

It has only been since the arrival of the Americans that Madame Cocaud has run a restaurant at all. For nine-and-twenty years she kept a small, lazy little *brasserie* in the square opposite the *Mairie* in a morsel of a French town so old that, with someone to guide you, you can still find portions of the wall the Romans built back in the days when the Germans were just beginning to be a nuisance. There she lived with her son and toiled mightily in order that he might have as good an education as any boy in all that part of the country.

She had her way, and he was rapidly gaining reputations at home and abroad as a teacher and lecturer—a lecturer on peace, as it happens—when the war came and off he went to the front. It was in the second fall of the war that word of his death came to the little house across the way from the *Mairie* and the light of Madame Cocaud's life went out. She was left alone with her memories, a silent, stricken woman who seemed to have forgotten how to smile.

Then Came the Americans

Then one fine day someone hit upon her town as the very site for what is now a rapidly expanding American Army post, and one hot, midsummer afternoon, the first Americans came rattling over the flagstones of its narrow streets. Most of them made for the taverns where the signs swung free and the little green tables invited all and sundry to sit down in front.

But one tired and dusty boy put his head in Madame Cocaud's door and asked for some eggs. He called them "woofs," but she understood, and as he looked very young and very hungry she prepared him a great plate of them and retired into the back room to wipe her eyes furtively on the corner of her apron. It was only when he insisted with great vehemence on paying something that she reluctantly named some preposterously small price and so found herself launched unexpectedly in the restaurant business.

Why Madame Is Famous

For, from then on, it has not been easy, any night, to find a corner at Madame Cocaud's—a cramped little place at best, all hung with strange brass pots and pans and festooned with still stranger strings of sausage. From that corner, through the mist of smoke

that hangs like a heavy fog in the old, time-stained kitchen, you can see her sending over the hearth, chucking to herself as from a single fire of crackling twigs, she brings forth marvels in the way of omelets and *biftek* and *pain perdu* and *saucisses* (country style).

Best and most famous of all are her *crêpes*, the delicate French griddle-cake of which no one has even been known to have enough. They say it takes 20 years to learn to flip-flop them in the pan and then flip-flop them to your plate as she can do it. She used to make them only for that boy of hers when he was at home from school for his vacations, but now she has so many boys to feed, she sometimes has to call upon a neighbor to help with the *crêpes*. She even has hopes—probably vain ones—of training a few of the Americans to cook their own.

Madame Smiles Again

The neighbors have begun to notice that Madame Cocaud is smiling once more for the first time since the second autumn of the war. They notice, too, with no little disapprobation, that she is charging an almost indecent minimum for her dinners. They argue with her about this. Some day the Americans will be gone, for the war cannot last forever, they say, and she should be storing away a little profit against the lonely years to come. "Dance, now!" is her reply. "What would I do with a fortune? On whom could I spend it?"

Indeed, she seems to think of herself as a sort of special mess sergeant for the American Army. It is a community affair with her. When business is brisk, she is so preoccupied with her frying pan that she often begs the boys to come around some other night to settle their accounts. When, before the ban on these things, her own stock of sugar or *confiture* ran low, she rather expected them to open up their boxes from home and replenish her shelves. And they did it, too.

Equality and Fraternity

It is true that now and again one of them will bring down a jar of syrup, say, with instructions that it be saved just for his own use (like a shaving cup in an old-fashioned barber shop), but at this point her scant knowledge of English invariably deserts her. When he comes again, he is sure to find she has blandly passed the syrup till the bottle is empty. Once there went forth a staggering order that no American soldier in that part of the world might so much as cross the threshold of a place where even light wines were sold, on penalty of death or kitchen police. It looked like the end of Madame Cocaud's. There were great sinkings of the head, and one long day with an old silence and the old order in the place.

After this much suspense, Madame got out her finest lace *coif*, donned her finest gown (slightly low-necked), and called upon the major. She had, she said with a perfectly straight face, long been waiting for an excuse to stop the sale of liquor on her premises. Thereafter, nothing more demoralizing than *café au*

AS WE KNOW THEM

THE FIRST LIEUTENANT—OLD STYLE

He's longer on the setting-up than any loot we've got—
He makes us bend and bust our backs in weather cold or hot:
He's fierce inspecting billets, and he's fierce on mounting guard,
And that poor first platoon of his sure gets it awful hard.

He takes a detail out to work, and works 'em to the bone,
He hikes a detail back from work; you ought to hear 'em groan.
When he starts up the double as they're coming to a hill—
He loves to pass the other gangs, and leave 'em standing still.

You never can get by him with your hands tucked out of sight;
Your pockets were not made for that," he'll tell you; 't'p'raps he's right.
Salutes? You've got to snup 'em up until your shoulder burns—
At that, you never match the one the Loot himself returns!

He never seems to sleep at all, he never's known to rest;
The old 'uns all are strong for him; the young 'uns say, "A pest!"
The old 'uns, though, know how he won those silver shoulder-bars,
And, knowing that, they hope some day he'll sport the golden stars!

It should ever be served within her walls.

Once more the doors opened and the frying pan sizzled over the twigs. It was to such a place, lured by the growing renown of the *crêpes au saucisses*, that a great American lady—known to every ready of society columns and women's pages back home—descended on Madame Cocaud's for one of her "sweet little dinners" and the "quantities and quantities of atinos, phere" that went with them.

She was so obviously a grand lady that Madame Cocaud paragonically assumed (or pretended to) that she was at least the wife of the President of the United States. For that one night, the place was disorganized, the enlisted men could hardly get waited on at all and there was great sulking in the corners. Madame Cocaud was desolated and the next night, when the great lady came again, it was not the dinner of the enlisted men that was slow in reaching the table.

And Then Came the Captain

Why the enlisted men were treated with such special consideration, few of them guessed and none knew for sure till one memorable night not long ago when a passing captain took *in chambre priée* and ordered wine while the bar was still on it. He was much surprised when the handmaiden replied that they never served it.

Madame was summoned. She confirmed the dreadful rumor. The captain assured her he had the money to pay for it. One did not have to be rich, she replied, to dine at her place. Besides, to sell wine, it was *defendu*.

"But," protested the captain, "I am an officer and those rules are local and are for enlisted men at that."
"So is this place," said Madame Cocaud, her voice trembling, but her eyes alight. "I prefer them. My son was in the Army, Monsieur," and this was the end of the conversation, "my son was in the Army and he was a simple *soldat*."

SCARED?—YOU BET THEY ARE

Cadet Aviators Can See No Romance in Initial Flight

"Are we scared when we make our first flight?" said a cadet aviator talking of his back-home training. "Of course we're scared. It's fun to look at the pictures, and to imagine yourself up there in the clouds, but when it comes to stepping into your machine beside the instructor and expecting all that dead-

WHY IS IT?

That, just after you've located a pul in a camp about four and a half kilometres-away, and have promised to hike over and see him on the following Sunday if it's a day off, you always find your name on the K. P. or guard list the night before, and have no way of letting him know you can't get there?

That, just after the Skipper gives you a hand on something you've done, and you begin to think you're aces high with him and everything's going fine, yours has to be the only gun in the platoon with a speck of rust on it, and you have to begin all over again?

That, just after you've broken in a new pipe, and got it in such shape that it doesn't burn your tongue or take the top of your head off every time you smoke it, and you begin to think it's the best pipe you ever had, you have to go and drop it out of your pocket on the bike, and start breaking in a new one all over again?

That, just after you've got comfortably situated in a billet, and have put up a shelf for all your stuff and a rack for your gun and your harness and everything, and have a beam-in and understand all fixed up so you can read after taps without the sergeant getting wise, the General has to take it into his head to move the whole blooming outfit and you have to tear everything down?

That, just after you've got your mail all straightened out and the folks at home writing to correct address, for a wonder, the P. O. department takes it into its head to renumber all the stations, and your letters all go straggling for another month?

DOC DIDN'T MEAN ANY HARM

But One Convalescent Must Have Felt Worse for a Minute

This came from a base hospital. Private X had undergone an operation. He was wheeled from the operating room into a ward and at the end of an indefinite period recovered from the anesthetic, held an inventory of himself and brightened.

"I feel better," he said. "And now I'm glad it's all over."
"Huh," said the man in the cot on his right, "don't be too sure it's all over. They left a sponge in me and had to cut me open again to get it."

"Yes," said the man on his left, "and the doctor left his scissors in me and had to probe for them again."

Just then the doctor entered the ward. "Has anybody," he asked, "seen my hat?"

STOP, LOOK, LISTEN

There's no use pulling a long face—much more is gained by a smile; cheer up, dig in, keep busy, do the best you can all the while. At times you may feel you're ill-treated, but a grinch won't help to show that your estimate of ability is quite correct, you know. Don't forget you're in France for a purpose; discomfort is part of the game that comes with the signal honor of adding U. S. to your name. Remember, by pulling together, morning and noon and night, we'll hasten the doom of the Prussian and prove that our cause is right. So cheer up, smile and keep busy; acquire some hop and spin; we're in this war to the finish; make your motto "Work, Grin and Win."—Major Joseph Caccavajo, Engrs., U. S. A.

ALL KINDS OF TALENT FOR HOSPITAL THEATER

Actors, Actresses, Scene Shifters, Stage Carpenters, Costumer and Playwright are Recruited on Short Notice

It may be some time before E. H. Solheim and his troupe are ready for the A.E.F. circuit and Elsie Janis (*matheusement*) cannot be in every Y.M.C.A. hut every night of the war, but in the meantime, every camp and post behind the lines can put on its own show. And most of them do.

Not long ago Base Hospital No. Blank decided, apropos of nothing, to go into the theater business for one night only and discovered, upon investigation, that all of the dramatic lights necessary to stage a complete show were hidden under olive drab somewhere about the premises.

The director, bred in that celebrated dramatic school, Dartmouth College, proved, with a howling success, that you have only to scratch an American soldier to find a playwright, a scene-painter, an orchestra leader, a costume designer or what you will.

It was decided that there must be a play, a real play with scenery and costumes and dialogue and plot and everything for at least one part of the program. Did any one have a play in his barrack bag? A canvass was hastily held which yielded nothing but one water-soaked copy of "Machbeth" and this was rejected as being a little too elaborate and not quite so full of superfluous laughs as the occasion seemed to require.

There could be no recourse to the familiar custom of telephoning Samuel French & Co. to send up 20 short and snappy comedies for selection. There was no way for it but to detail an enlisted man to write a piece at once, so a poor wretch, who had once published an article on the decline of the drama, was obliged, for his sins, to retire with a typewriter and, some time between retreat and taps, come forth with the "Great American Play."

Plenty of Feminine Talent

He did—thoughtfully making six carbon copies while he was about it so they would not compel him to type the parts for distribution among the cast. Knowing that there were many dazzling nurses in the hospital, he was free to have as many feminine figures in that cast as his heart desired. Knowing that about the hardest thing to find in France would be, not a bowl of sugar, but a suit of *Katzenstiel*, we-makes-clothes-for-young-men apparel, he thoughtfully made the male characters all soldiers and, just to give the story a special glow, he laid the scene back home shortly after the declaration of peace.

You could see the handsome young surgeon opening an once more the apartment he had locked behind him when he went off to war. You saw him renewing acquaintance with a pair of silk socks and watched him studying as a curiously a copy of a New York newspaper that had been left at the door the day he shook the dust of New York from his feet.

"Why its front page is all about the Kaiser," he mused. "I wonder whatever

became of him." Thus stealing Will Roger's stuff.

The question of a star was quickly settled. One of the non-coms had played several hundred roles as a preliminary to enlisting, and stuffing his pants into his pocket, he was able to memorize it as he tore about the countryside on an ambulance. But what about costumes? After a brief lecture the wardmaster of the first surgical ward shyly confessed what he had kept dark up to that moment—that in civil life he had been a Fifth Avenue dressmaker.

Found—A Real Stage Hand

It took him no time to make the chosen nurses look like the society women in a five-reel movie drama. Fired by this example, a corporal of engineers, enlisted as a carpenter, admitted that he had been a stage-hand for 25 years and knew more about scenery than any other living man except the night watchman of Cain's storehouse in New York.

The workmanlike "center-door fanny" set he then proceeded to execute out of some wood and canvass substantiated his claim, which was proved beyond all doubt when you heard him slipping the ropes on the opening night. You had only to shut your eyes to think you saw self backstage at the Grand Opera House in Chicago.

It all had to be done in a hurry. It's not safe to dally with rehearsals in the A.E.F. Selected a cast for a performance two weeks later and by that time your company is all over the map of France. Select a U. S. M. as a rehearsal hour and you will find your leading heavy has been put on night duty and your *ligonnie* has just been isolated in charge of a scarlet fever shack. Rehearsals must be held when chance offers. The ambulance driver and his orderly can go over their scene together while burning up the local highway; the nurse and the wardmaster can rehearse their song while giving an ear irrigation at night if the patient is helpless. It had to be that way this time.

At the eleventh hour, the well-laid plans went all to pieces when it was found that neither the scenery nor the audience would fit into the mess hall. A theater must be found in 24 hours. It was. A detachment of engineers found it. They pitched their tents, evacuated their own barracks, knocked out one end, put up a stage and installed his professional set of electric headlights, foot and spot as any tragedienne could ask.

AS YOU WERE

"I'm going over the top," observed the truck driver as he finished up the washing of the body.

"Sound off," said the piano-tuner as he played a chord which failed to harmonize.

"Column right," announced the accountant as he finished checking his figures.

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