

AMERICA IN FRANCE

VI.—Lorraine

More than any other part of the land of the fleur-de-lis, Lorraine is "America in France." It was in Lorraine that American troops first entered the line...

Most of us now know that we are 1,500,000 strong, by far the larger part of us were still in the States then—can remember the thrill that went from coast to coast when the cables brought word that American and German had met in their first clash of arms...

The history of Lorraine is a territorial unit dates from 843, when the Treaty of Verdun divided the kingdom of Louis I, called the Pious, also the Debonair, among his three sons—who were also grandsons of Charlemagne—Lothair, Louis the German and Charles the Bold.

French and German There was considerable fighting before the partition was effected. Charles and Louis combined to do battle against their brother, and their alliance, made on their father's death in 1840, was renewed two years later in the famous Strassburg oaths...

The treaty of Verdun gave Lothair "the Middle Kingdom," an indefinite wedge of territory stretching from the North Sea to the Mediterranean along the valleys of the Rhine and the lower Rhine. To Louis went the region to the west, to Charles that to the east.

Heritage of Wars and Woe Lothair's kingdom speedily began to reap its heritage of wars and woe. It passed to Lothair's second son, Lothair II, and it was from this second Lothair that it derived its name—Lothair's Kingdom, Lothair Regnum, Lotharingia, Lorraine.

It is striking testimony to the turbulent character of the Empire of that day that, between 910 and 955, Lorraine was five times ravaged by Hungarian incursions. In the latter year the invaders were so badly defeated that they did not come again, and the country began to rise from its ruins.

Of all the invasions that have been visited upon Lorraine, before or since, perhaps none stands out in history so vividly as that led by Charles the Bold in 1477, when western Europe was still aubere with recollections of the Hundred Years' War, the war that brought Jeanne d'Arc out of Lorraine, brought her to the height of her glory, and led her to the stake at Rouen in 1431.

Nancy Is Besieged Charles's only virtue was his boldness, and even that went too far. In his struggle, now crafty, now open, always bloody, against Louis XI—who was as stubborn and implacable an enemy—he set an excellent example of how to wage one kind of war as even the Kaiser could wish to follow.

In 1475 he made peace with Louis that he might seek game elsewhere. He overthrew the Lorraine, invaded Switzerland, was driven out in utter rout, lost two-thirds of his men in another battle, and then decided to retire to his castle. Two months later, as he was brooding over his plight, word came that the young Duke of Lorraine was besieging Nancy.

Thither, with the remnant of his army, went Charles. He arrived before Nancy to find that, three days before, the city had capitulated to his enemy. On January 5, 1477, a battle was fought near Nancy which witnessed the death of Charles and the dispersion of his already badly mauled army. His mangled body was found two days later on the muddy bank of a frozen brook. It was the death he deserved, perhaps it was the death he would have wished. By the young duke's orders, he was given an honorable burial.

Name Linked With Alsace It was during the days of Richelieu, the great churchman-statesman, whose name outshines that of his master (or servant), Louis XIII, that the name of Lorraine became first linked with that of Alsace. The cession of Alsace to France, officially marked in 1648, six years after Richelieu's death, by the treaty of Westphalia, ending the devastating Thirty Years' War, pushed the frontier of France eastward to its natural boundary, the Rhine.

Lorraine itself, however, did not cease to be a duchy and become part of France, until the death of Stanislas Leczinski in 1766. Just how anyone named Stanislas Leczinski came to be mixed up in the history of Lorraine or of France is more easily explained than might appear on the surface. Stanislas I, father-in-law of Louis XV, aspired to the Polish crown, was elected (for the Polish monarchy was elective) and was then refused recognition by Russia and Prussia. The Russians seized Warsaw, and Stanislas fled back to France, leaving his cause to collapse.

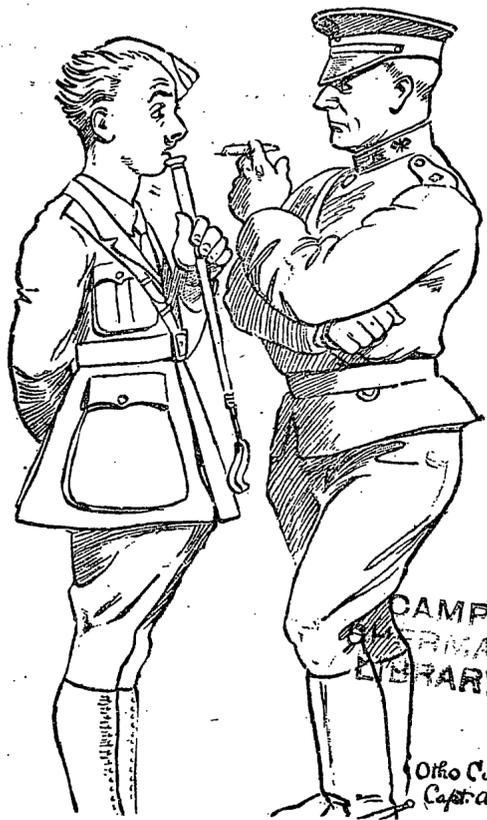
To compensate for the loss of Poland, he was granted the Duchy of Lorraine and the then duke, Francis, was given Tuscany, in Italy. But it was provided that on the death of Stanislas, Lorraine should be united in perpetuity to France.

Perpetual—Until 1871 That perpetuity lasted, as all the world knows, until 1871. The treaty of Frankfurt, which ended the Franco-Prussian War and thereby marked down a date that belongs in any chronological table of the war that began in 1914, ceded to Prussia, in addition to all of Alsace (the departments of Haut-Rhin and Bas-Rhin), the arrondissements of Metz, Thionville, Sarreguemines, Chateau-Salins and Sarrebourg—only a part of Lorraine, but a part rich not only in coal and iron, but in love for France.

Lorraine has a language, rather a patois, of its own, but that language is not German. In Lorraine they say "gémé" instead of "jumeau" (twin), "dettel" for "dentelle" (lace), "journaige" for "journaie" (day), "Kase" they would call it "Kase," they would if they were German.

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