

CHRISTMAS, 1918



BREST AND PARIS WELCOME HEAD OF SISTER REPUBLIC OVERSEAS

Continued from Page 1

Yankee guns got busy on their welcome salute to France. At the same time there put out from shore a lighter, conveying M. Stephen Pichon, French minister of foreign affairs; General Tasker H. Bliss, military representative of the United States on the Supreme War Council at Versailles; Ambassador William H. Sharp, General Pershing and other French and American dignitaries. The lighter proceeded to the President's vessel, aboard which M. Pichon proffered the formal welcome of France to the chief executive of the United States, and received from Mr. Wilson the assurance that he was glad and proud to be there.

Just then the formal welcome of France burst from the ancient walls of the city of Brest, from the quays, from the hills and trees, from every point of vantage overlooking the harbor. "Vive le Président Wilson!" it started on the ramparts to the north and "Vive le Président Wilson!" it echoed from the rocky promontories to the south. And all the while some 10,000 or more Yanks, mainly from the big Pontonneux embarkation camp, standing at east or at rest along the highway over which their President was to ride to the railway station, fretted and fumed because they couldn't leave ranks and yell their lungs out along with the Bretonese.

And what a show of holiday apparel Breton put on! Ancient dames in heron-like kirtles, coifs and aprons of marvellous embroidery were out on the city walls, rubbing their spare old elbows against those of all the Yanks and gobs and polts who could get off—or who were AWOL—to see the great sight. Matronly and maidenly Bretonese were out in their quaint caps, bolero jackets and multicolored scarfs.

Finery of Old Times

But the ladies of Breton had no monopoly of the gala garb, for all the old gentlemen of the famous old province had donned their distinctive velvet hats, their pea-jackets, their wide-brimmed sashes and their false but none the less resplendent shirt-fronts. Yes, and the young ones, too, donned all the finery which their fathers had worn on their wedding days, and at family funerals, and christenings and other solemn occasions. The province of Brittany dog deep into its cedar chests to display for its guest all the beauty and picturesqueness of the Breton days gone by; and no more gently pleasing, quaint or lovelier sight could be imagined.

Meanwhile, down on Pier No. 3, where a brief day before Yankee Stevedores had been tossing the brown tins and hardback boxes into cars with a zeal that would have made Old John Boche, had he been so minded, think twice about trying to bust the armistice, the Brest reception committee, actively aided by a clean-up squad of colored Yanks, was putting the final touches on the dainty little table reception to which the President was to step immediately he left the lighter.

In gorgeous blue and gold and white and black there shone from the walls the coat of arms of the proud little city—the fleur-de-lis of royal France on one panel, the ermine of Brittany on the other, the joined fasces and garlands of republican France, with its graceful monogram; the flags of all the Allies; the coat of arms of all the provinces of France, and the old E Pluribus Unum, eagle, scroll, darts and all. The walls were banked with palms, with myrtle, with evergreens, and festooned electric lights ran around the moulding. Altogether, it was a little piece of dreamland, gotten up in honor of the great man who, France confidently expects, will make all its dreams of peace and freedom come true.

Outside, on the pier itself, Yank sentries paced nervously up and down, obeying in strict literalness that most general of all general orders—"to observe everything that takes place within sight or hearing"—politely reminding

ing colonels, correspondents and everybody who tried to sneak a smoke to take the nervous edge off the waiting process and generally keeping the scene of the landing in order. Aides, Stevedore lieutenants, special mission and liaison officers scuttled about, giving last minute instructions and counter-instructions to each other and to anybody who happened to be around. French fonctionnaires did the same; so did naval officers of both countries; so did everybody, until at last all things were ready.

At five minutes after 3 the lucky possessors of binoculars on shore could see the President's engine being rapidly hauled down from the mast-head of the George Washington. The moment for which everyone had waited all that expectant day was approaching.

As the lighter Tuidno, a leisuredly, dapper-like sidewheeler, steamed away from the big liner's side, a mighty cheer went up from the massed thousands on the old ramparts, and 20,000 Yankee tars of the assembled fleet manned the rails and gave three rousing ones to boot. The guns barked anew, their flashes gleaming like fireflies through the fog. Far in a corner of one of the harbor forts the French field music sounded "Aux Champs." Down on the pier that awaited the President a French marine band broke into "The Star-Spangled Banner."

Tuidno Draws Alongside

Now the proper thing to do when the National Anthem is played is literally to "face the music," to face it while standing at the stiffest attention and salute. The Yanks on the dock and near it, however, did nothing of the sort; they faced the President's boat, keeping their salute and attention the while. They relaxed for a moment when the band stopped for a breath, only to stiffen again as it crashed into "La Marseillaise." And then—and then the Tuidno drew alongside.

"Where's the President?" the murmur rang along the pier. In a minute the well-informed and movie-frequenting spotted Secretary Lansing and gave him a great cheer to which he bowed a pleased and flushed return. In another instant the A.E.F.'s own General Pershing was deserted, and a lusty roar of acclamation went up. Mrs. Wilson drew another tremendous shout as she stood there, with a little silk American flag in her hand, waving and beaming at all her delighted countrymen. But—and there was the question—where was the President?

The Tuidno bumped up alongside the pier like an ungainly rook trying to do his part toward dressing up the line. Nimble Yank Stevedores and French matelots grabbed hold of the ropes, and in a trice had compiled the red-white-and-blue-festooned gangplank onto its counterpoise on the lighter. With a final wrench and twist, a last creaking of cordage and timber, the way was made safe for the Presidential party to alight.

One by one the good gray-haired counselors, French and American, mounted the steps leading to the gangplank from the deck of the lighter and stepped ashore. At sight of them the long line of young French marines along the dock-side sprang to present arms, and their Jarlons sounded. Up to "present arms" came the sword of every French officer on the pier. But—where was the President?

First Citizen on Shore

More good gray-haired gentlemen, in frock coats and tall hats. More gray-haired gentlemen in olive drab and silver stars. More gray-haired gentlemen resplendent in Navy or horizon blue, with gold and silver decorations twinkling in the first bit of sunlight Brest had seen that day. And then—

"Oh, say, can you see, by the dawn's early light—"

every civilian in the crowd was doffed as if by instinct. And across the narrow little bridge, with alert, quick step, but in hand and smiling graciously, as if with a keen and boyish pleasure in the sights around him, marched America's first citizen, come to repay the visit of America's first and oldest friend, the Marquis de Lafayette.

It needed only ears after that to realize that the President had at last arrived.

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NEW WATCH ON RHINE XMAS GIFT TO WORLD

Continued from Page 1 able column of olive drab melted into the all-enveloping mist. Not so the flag, and the standards, when their turn came to cross the Rhine. Always they shone bravely from shore to shore. It was the one touch of color in all that drab and cheerless morning, from the moment when, midstream, the river wind caught and flung them wide, till, dwindling, dwindling, they became only a point of scarlet in a curtain of mist like a poppy blooming in the cranny of a gray wall. And always, faintly from the other shore, came the music of the hand playing in the rain.

Massed Since Preceding Sunday While the First Brigade, with ponderous trucks and smoking kitchens, moved over the pontoon, the Second Brigade was crossing by the beautiful three-span Pfaffendorf bridge near by. Below, the famous Thirty-second was crossing and below them the Second, while above, the Third had edged upstream a bit toward Bingen.

For this crossing, the troops had been massed on the left bank since the preceding Sunday, when the first cavalry trotted into Roman and the first infantry—a whole trainload of affable doughboys—arrived in Coblenz.

In their sector of the Rhine, certainly, the Yankees feel quite at home. They were sternly forbidden to wander out of it, for the various bridgeheads were kept as severely separate as watertight compartments, but the outposts could not help meeting occasionally, and on Thursday of last week, when troops that looked hauntingly like our own marched into Bonn, the Yanks discovered to their great delight, that their neighbors below stream were the Canadians.

"Hail, Kennida!"

"The exchange of courtesies would run something like this: "Cheer, Kennida, what division?" "The Second." "Is 'at so? So's this." "The Second American? Some division, from what they tell us." "We'll say it is. Where's the British?" "The Imperials? Oh, down stream somewhere." "What's your main town?" "Bonn." "What kind of a place?" "Ditto." "How are things going?" "Lovely. Just lovely. Couldn't be better, if we were home in the States." "Home in the States? Where do you get that stuff?" "Oh, well, I'm from Iowa myself. Half of us are Americans." "The hell you say. Then, why didn't you come over in our Army?" "Because it didn't come over soon enough."

A thoughtful silence for a while. "Well, see you in Iowa, Kennida." "Right." "This it befall that Canada and America crossed the Rhine shoulder to shoulder." Now the Stars and Stripes float from the skyline flagpole of Ehrenbreitstein.

Ehrenbreitstein sounds rather like the name of some cloak and suit house in New York, but it is really a fortress so formidable that it is called the Gibraltar of the Rhine. If, when they began to fashion it just after Waterloo, any prophetic soul had told the powers that were that a century later its garrison would echo to the tread of soldiers from the absurd, little sipping republic across the Atlantic they would have flung him into its lowest keep as a dangerous lunatic.

The fortress, which copies the old hill-top castles of which the weather-battered ruins still crown down on the Rhine, was reared on the site of first a strong hold and then a castle for centuries there at the junction of the Rhine and Moselle. It is hollowed out from just such a sheer riverside rock as the Lorelei itself. Its vast underground chambers will billet a hundred thousand men. By spiral paths that lead through tunnels and over drawbridges, you reach at last its battlements, which rise full 355 feet above the river bed. From them you can see triangular Coblenz laid out like a relief map at the base of the fortress and survey the historic countryside from Stolzenfels to Andernach.

Baudelock's account of Ehrenbreitstein is accurate, though vague. It contains what today is a serious error. It says: "Foreign officers are not admitted." Correct this to read "German officers," and the sentence may stand. From Ehrenbreitstein itself, which is a small town opposite Coblenz, the bridgehead reaches for 30 kilometers into Germany.

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