

and brilliant red poppies, nor that the sunshine could ever soften the grimness of barbed wire and dugouts. Yesterday I saw for myself.

Beyond Royce about eight kilometers, "as the shell flies," the old first-line German trenches can be seen from the road. Barbed-wire entanglements stretch away to left and right, half hidden in the grass, and dugouts covered by heavy logs occur at intervals. Where the trenches began to run along close to the road, we left the motors and climbed down among the narrow, rustic walks that are trenches.

I saw a tube of iron with a star-shaped end which interested me; the lieutenant hastily called out that it was a hand grenade. I had read too many war stories to be inclined to have anything more to do with it, so I passed obediently by; the next minute I caught my foot in some infernal machine and my heart leaped as I wildly clutched at the sides of the trench for support. It was a twisted bedspring.

On our homeward journey I saw things that simply did not exist to my eyes earlier in the day. The country around Bailly is full of trenches and barbed wire, dugouts, shell holes, and shade trees cut down by the road, all of which escaped me before I had had those five full hours of tense observation; and just as I did not at first distinguish the signs of war, so I did not fully consider until afterward the completeness of the destruction we had seen. In the section of forty miles square that we skirted, not one bridge is left—the only ones now in existence are of temporary military construction. The same is true of telephone and telegraph poles—not one remains. Also there is not a stick of furniture of any sort except what was too heavy to be taken away, such as pulpits and big tables, which were hacked to pieces and are of no value now. That the furniture was not blown up with the houses I am sure, for not a piece can be found in the ruins, and I looked carefully for any trace. Germany must be full of French furniture. What it is wanted for I can't imagine.

It is wonderful what vistas can be thrown open by the experiences of one day. I never again can hear of any one who comes from Chauny or Royce or Lassigny without seeing row upon row of deserted, ruined houses. I never can hear of a fortune lost in the war without picturing the ruined sugar factory at Flavy-le-Martel. And yet the sight of men and mules and engines clearing out the canal at Ham is more significant than either of these, for it means that the energy which once built the cities of France is deathless. A new beginning is being made within sound of the guns; and we are helping. *We are helping!* ESTHER.

Over Periscope Pond, by Esther Sayles Root and Marjorie Crocker. Houghton, Mifflin Company. \$1.50.

Over Periscope Pond

MOST of us want to go over; most of us can't. But the next best way to get the spirit of the men and women who are fighting and working at the front is to read their letters home. In that respect *Over Periscope Pond* accords an unusual privilege. It is a collection, grouped to make the narrative continuous, of the letters written by two American girls in Paris to their families. In October, 1916, Miss Esther Root, of New York, recently graduated from Smith College, sailed for Paris to assist in the war work of Dr. Ernest W. Shurtleff, of the Protestant American Church. In December, 1916, Miss Marjorie Crocker, of Boston, sailed for the same purpose. In February the two girls met in Paris and soon became fast friends. Their work together, hard service at a *vestiaire* from which clothing was distributed to thousands of refugees, takes on the quality of adventure in these letters colored with human sympathy, amusing incident and vivid comment. There are stirring struggles with a recalcitrant Ford engine and with irregular French verbs, a week-end visit at the chateau of a marquise—and a visit to the front line trenches. Miss Root's description of that trip deserves more space than we can give it:

September 9, 1917.

DEAREST FATHER:

I've been there! Past the sentries, thru the devastated villages, right into the army zone.

The refugees at the *Vestiaire* tell vivid stories, and they all have that inborn dramatic instinct which can make live the scenes they describe. But even from their background I had no idea of the look and atmosphere of the ruined towns as they now are. No one ever told me that the trenches taken from the Germans a few months ago would now be half hidden by long grass