

By

DIANA DE BOSMELET

as told to

ANTHONY VEILLER

In Normandie, the day before, it had still been winter, but here in Paris the grass in the bois was already green and the trees were coming into bud. Philippe's leave was almost over and we were busy shopping, buying each other farewell presents. I had got him a new watch, a mechanical marvel which would not only tell time but compute distances and Heaven alone knows what else. The salesman, noting Philippe's uniform, had gravely assured him that, with it, he would be able to accurately estimate the distance of enemy artillery, though this seemed questionable to us both since, although the war had been on for six months, he had yet to hear the sound of an enemy shell. Now we were in Madelois, one of those ultra-smart shops in the Boulevard La Madeleine. He had just bought me a pin made up as a little golden anchor, the symbol of his regiment in the Colonial Army. And then we saw the boots. Their leather was soft as chamois, their sheen as bright as old mahogany. And already on them was a pair of golden spurs. As soon as Philippe saw them I knew they must be his. His mother had told me too often how, in the last war, when her husband came home on leave, he would have to put his boots on the highest shelf to keep his small son out of them. His love of the shiny military footgear persisted so that, when he did his military service at eighteen, he always got up at five o'clock instead of six to have an extra hour to polish his equipment. I had the boots brought to us but Philippe shook his head forlornly. He could not wear them. Not yet. Only a Colonial Captain was entitled to the

golden spurs. My suggestion that they could, after all, be removed was met with a look of utter horror. That I could make such a profane suggestion was intolerable. And, anyway, it would only be a question of a little time before he was promoted and became a captain himself.

Two days later, he departed to join his regiment and I returned to Normandie, carrying the precious boots with me for safe keeping.

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The chateau in which we lived stood atop a high plateau in the center of the lovely Norman countryside with wide avenues, bordered by tall beeches and gracious linden trees, leading up to it. It had been in Philippe's family for more than three centuries, and because of its great age, the house was filled with magic for me and I thrilled to its secret rooms and hidden staircases. They had a prophetic eye, those builders of the early seventeenth century.

The estate consisted of about fifteen hundred acres, divided into seven prosperous farms, and a large expanse of woods. Each farm was leased to a farmer, in every instance a member of a family who had tilled those very fields for generations. The place belonged to them as much as to us. In the woods themselves there lived a family of charcoal burners, the fifth generation to occupy the little wigwam in the center of the forest, and from father to son was handed down the secret of where the best turf for burning was to be found. Of all the people of France to whom I am indebted, my greatest obligation surely lies to those men of the forest. Sitting here before the fire of my tiny cottage on the California coast it is hard even for me to believe what I so well remember of them and of the others in Normandie, of the good people in the little village on the banks of the Indre, of my friends in St. Gil, and above all, of those friendly and courageous brigands whose only home was the quays and brothels of Marseilles. I had come to Normandie to live in the fall of 1937, shortly after the birth of my son, Pierre. Although I was English,

and Philippe, whose profession was international law and whose practice lay as much in London as in France, had to spend as much time in one country as the other, still, once the baby was born, nothing would do but that we must come to France to live. Was Pierre not French? Must he not grow up in his own soil? So to France I came, a stranger to a strange land, to live in this vast establishment with my husband, my mother-in-law, my English Nana, and my two children.

But I remained a stranger for only a short time. Like most Englishwomen, I have a passion for gardening. I did not know, and certainly would not have cared if I had known, that French ladies did not dig with their hands in the earth and could not understand the morbid fascination the villagers seemed to find in seeing me, grimy and dirty, grubbing around in the gardens. It was Philippe, grinning happily, who gave me the explanation one night when he informed me that I was securely entrenched in the affections of the village. The word had passed around that "Madame la Baronne did not fear to get her bottom in the manure." This, apparently, was the highest praise that could be given me.

We lived here in complete happiness except for one very large fly in Philippe's cinctment, the feud that existed between my mother-in-law and myself. There was, from the beginning, a strong tussle as to who should be the lady of the house and he could never realize that this in no way affected our very real devotion to each other. Me-me, as

women of France were truly magnificent. To illustrate: the largest farm on our estate was operated by a man named Maitre Hocquard....in Normandie the farmers and their wives still bore the old titles of Maitre and Maitresse and Heaven defend anyone who failed to so dignify them. The Maitre was, at this time, in his late sixties, a man of fantastic girth and the ruddiest face I have ever seen. He would have made a superb Falstaff if Falstaff had been French.

I might add that his age in no way interfered with his sublime jealousy of his equally aged and equally corpulent wife. I remember that, shortly before the war, he decided his parlor needed re-papering. We sent the paper-hanger who, three times, was turned away from the cottage. Philippe announced that this must stop. The paper-hanger was a busy man and must get on with his work. The next time he arrived he was admitted and papered the room. But the Maitre perched precariously throughout the entire day in an apple tree outside the parlor window to keep a wary eye on the intruder and see that no improper advances were made toward the Maitresse.

The Hocquards, prolific as well as jealous, had sixteen living children, seven boys and nine girls. Six of the boys were called up, leaving only the youngest, a lad of thirteen. Yet the fields were always plowed as deep and planted as well. The little boy and the girls saw to it that nothing was left undone, carrying on the backbreaking work alone from dawn to dusk. I also remember driving into the village one afternoon in the pony cart---for lack of fuel the cars were used only

when absolutely necessary---and at the blacksmith's shop seeing the smithy's old grandmother, standing by the forge, the hoof of an enormous Percheron in her lap, as she pounded the nails into its shoe.

My own life was not an idle one. There was the whole estate to be managed, Red Cross work to be organized in the village, and, incidentally, some preparation made for the arrival of another child, expected at Christmas time. My father had come over from England in August and wanted me to go back with him, to have my baby at home, but I had refused to leave. I wanted to stay where Philippe could join me when he got leave. I shall always remember Dad's farewell to me. "Well, darling, never mind...people are well used to having babies in France."

Philippe, assigned to the Colonial army, departed as happy as a child, his orders to report stamped with the magic initials G.S. which we naturally assumed meant Groupe-met Senegalase. These magnificent African soldiers were famous for their bravery and he was thrilled at the thought of serving with them. On arriving at camp he found, to his horror, that, instead, he was to command a detachment of "Joyeux" who had been attached to the Colonial army. I think only the French army contained such a division of troops, men convicted by the criminal courts and segregated so as not to contaminate as the respectable citizen soldiers. Needless to say, thus labelled, they made certain that their reputation deserved it. These

men arrived for duty, nearly all of them several days ahead of the date shown on their orders, most of them drunk, and all of them full of hatred for the army but detesting Hitler still more, and with a passionate love of liberty, the full value of which they knew by bitter experience. Their belligerent antagonism extended to Philippe, who determined to surmount it. If he was to lead them in battle they must trust him. He called them together and explained that he was, in civil life, an "avocat" and that his living had been made for years by defending men like themselves so that, since they had been his bread and butter, naturally he had none of the usual prejudices. I wonder what my distinguished barrister husband's impeccable clients would have said if they could have heard him thus blandly libelling them.

There are so many reasons that contributed to the downfall of France that it would be folly to try to list them but perhaps the existence of the "Joyeux" is at least symptomatic. In England or America, once a man has served a prison sentence, he has paid his debt to society. But in France all who had fallen afoul of the law were grouped together as pariahs. Most of them had never even been convicted of a serious offence, such as burglary, but had been found guilty of petty thievery, perhaps as very young men. Many of them had lived as decent citizens for years, married, had children, and now, suddenly, because of some youthful folly, long since atoned for, found themselves segregated as criminals. My husband was devoted to these men and, it subsequently developed, they to him.

One morning a little corporal came to him in a frenzied state of mingled grief and indignation. He had been robbed. Two hundred francs...his entire worldly fortune...was gone. That night, at mess time, Philippe addressed his platoon. "I have heard," he said, "that one of us has had some money stolen from him and am frightfully disappointed at the news. I had thought your hearts were buried and have trusted you as comrades. I will go on doing so. As a matter of fact, I am carrying quite a large sum of money in my wallet, something over two thousand francs. Now you all know that I hang my coat at night on a branch over my feet and I am sure that money is, and always will be, safe in your care. If we cannot trust each other, surely we can trust no one."

No more was said about it, but the next morning the corporal found his money stuffed under his blanket. Philippe's orderly later explained that the platoon had gone into a huddle about the affair and decreed that the thief should return the money. As he explained, "After all, we are all Joyeux together. We can steal enough from civilians or regular troops."

During his first weeks with the "Joyeux," Philippe and his men were given no combat training whatever though plenty of marching and counter-marching. The men, naturally, became very disgusted with this continual fatigue duty and, for the first time, Philippe began to wonder about "the greatest army in all Europe." It still shone in the reflected glory of Verdun and no one doubted it possessed the most brilliant general staff in the world. But could this senseless and utterly inadequate

training indicate that brilliance?

Then came the orders to move up into the line north of Metz. The men set off in the highest spirits, soon to be dissipated by ridiculously long marches under full equipment. It seemed that everything possible was being done to break their morale before they ever established contact with the enemy.

On their first night in the line, the officers were astonished by the elaborateness of the china and silver used at mess until all Hell broke loose in the next section of the front and it was discovered that the over-zealous "Joyeux" had calmly appropriated the belongings of the Dragoons stationed there. The purloined articles were returned with as good grace as possible and this should have been an end of the kind of prank that always happens among soldiers. But not at all. The Colonel promptly ordered the "Joyeux" disarmed. Philippe and his brother-officers refused to obey such a manifestly absurd order. Troops could not be left helpless in the front lines without weapons. If an attempt had even been made to disarm them it would have meant certain and thoroughly justified mutiny. Fortunately, by nightfall, the inane orders were rescinded. But the harm had been done.

After some weeks the men were withdrawn from the line and, after the same forced and inhuman marches, found themselves ultimately right back where they started from. It was on this march, with sorely exhausted troops, that Philippe nearly got himself court-martialed. The "Joyeux" were not allowed in any villages so when night fell, were ordered to

sleep in the woods. Philippe examined the suggested camping place and found nothing but a marshy bog and flatly refused to lead his men into it. Orders or no orders, he was going to take his men where they could at least get some sleep and marched them to the nearest village where they slept snugly in a large barn, warmed by the hay.

Once back to camp, the battalion found itself serving as a work battalion to be sent back to Africa, and Philippe, devoted as he was to his men, could no longer stand the idea of being a jailor and secretly applied for a transfer. It came in October, and, on his thirty-third birthday, he set off to join the 53rd Regiment of Colonial Infantry, then stationed near Commercy, East of Verdun. In his mind must have been visions of the lovely boots, waiting at home for him in Normandie. Now he would have chance to win the right to wear them. Now he was joining combat troops.

But if this experiences with the "Joyeux" had been a disappointment, the next months were to be heartbreaking, for now he found himself with a regiment of men from the Midi. The Midi is not, as the name might indicate, the center of France, but the far south, the grape country and the Riviera. The men of the Midi have ever regarded themselves as a separate people and the rest of France as a foreign country. Here communism, which had done so much to France, had taken its firmest root, and Philippe found himself in command of troops who calmly announced they had no intention of fighting; this was an im-

perialist war and did not concern them. Suppose France were invaded? A pity. But, after all, no invasion would ever penetrate as far as the Midi. It did not concern them. I wonder how they feel now; do they still think it did not affect them?

After two months, Philippe was ordered to report at the third army center for an officer's training course. Once more his hopes and his faith in the great traditions of the French army soared. All the ghastly inefficiency, all the muddled tactics, were only the result of unpreparedness, too great haste. Now the general staff was catching up.....the officers were to be trained in modern tactics and then the men could learn of the kind of warfare they were to face. As soon as the course began, he realized that what was being taught these officers, responsible for leadership in battle, was the course given during peace-time to men eligible for the rank of corporal.

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Back in Normandie, it was nearly time for my baby to arrive. It was a frightfully cold winter and already there was no coal or coke to be had. Andre valiantly plied the gigantic furnace with wood which burned up faster than he could pile it in. Me-me had been desperately ill with the flu and, on account of the baby's expected arrival, was not allowed near me. Philippe was due for leave at New Year's and I was determined to be done with the business of child-bearing before he got home. Poor little Diane, how furious I was with her for her laziness. And how silly I waste worry. For just at this time, Philippe's regiment moved up into the line. Leave or no leave, baby or no baby, nothing would keep him from the chance of action. So off he went with his gallant men from the Midi--heroic soldiers who would not enter a wood unless their officer went fifty yards ahead to prove there was no danger. If I seem unnecessarily bitter about the men, let me hasten to say that my criticism does not apply to the officers. There was gallant Perrat who, on June 3rd at the Somme, the minute he saw the Germans approaching, let out a joyous roar and charged to meet them, alone, his troops having deserted him. There was brave de Loriel who, surrounded by Germans and out of ammunition, went on firing blank cartridges, supplied him for some inexplicable reason, until his own brave heart was pierced by a real bullet. The Germans, it seems, did not use blanks.

At the front, Philippe learned there was a twenty

mile gap in the much vaunted Maginot line... (we were not to learn till later of that greater gap that ran the whole length of the Belgian border to the sea)... and he and his men occupied themselves in trying to plug it. It was freezing cold, fifteen to twenty degrees Centigrade below freezing, and the roads were vast sheets of ice.

This went on until the twelfth of January when he moved up to the "avant poste," the very front line, far in advance of the fortifications. He was stationed in a village called Merlebach. Half a mile away was the village of Nassweiler and, a couple of miles beyond, lay St. Nicolaus, nestling snugly in a fold of the river Warndt, both occupied by the Germans. Three months earlier the French had occupied all the land up to the Saar but, for no reason ever given, he had been withdrawn more than thirty miles back to the Maginot line, and were now engaged in attempting to reoccupy the land they had thus precipitately abandoned.

A well, with a good water supply, lay somewhere between the two lines and, in the morning the French troops would draw water from it and at night the Germans would come up and fill their buckets. On one occasion a new detachment of French troops, not familiar with the more social amenities, fired at the Germans and were notified they were to be punished by having their electricity shut off for three days, since the light plant lay in the German lines. This the Germans did. Can one wonder that with this kind of war being waged there was little martial spirit in the troops of France?

The Germans were completely informed of the movements of the French troops. When Philippe's men arrived they were greeted by the radio across in the German lines, broadcasting a welcome to them, naming their regiment and wishing it a pleasant holiday in the line. After the episode of the electricity it was definitely considered very bad form to shoot at the enemy even if he revealed himself. On one occasion a Major strongly reprimanded Philippe for giving orders to fire on a group of Germans sighted reconnoitering about a mile away. Did he want to have them all sitting in darkness. He might even, horrible thought, anger the Germans into bombarding them.

But, opposed to my husband's Major, stood a man like Lt. Colonel d'Harcourt, a cavalry officer who commanded the division's "groupe de Reconnaissance." He had dutifully carried out his orders to remain on the defensive and avoid any casualties. But the day he was relieved he showed his opinion of G.H.Q. by calmly mounting a horse and, with two volunteers, galloping across the border, making a perfect target of himself with his drawn saber and unholstered revolver, and then riding back to his own lines. He saluted the commander correctly and said, "I have the honor to report, sir, that the village you are treating with such respect, is quite unoccupied." With which he wheeled his horse and rode off.

It was Philippe's job to take and organize the ridge before St. Niclaus. He occupied a little miner's cottage and post with firm instructions to report anyone passing. In the middle of the night he was awokened by another officer, who had arrived

furious at not having been challenged. The sentry in the front of the house should have seen the approaching party, clearly visible for a great distance moving across the moon-lit snow. The man confessed he thought it might be a German patrol and, if he kept quiet, they might go by without knowing the house was occupied and thus eliminate any danger of a fight. And let that stand as my farewell to the glorious spirit of the troops at the Midi.

While Philippe was in the "avant poste" he, with four hardy adventurers, walked over to the village of St. Niclaus, and returned, loaded down with jams, a typewriter, and a fine spool of wire, sorely needed for setting up barricades. For this his friend, the Major, threatened him with court-martial. To which, Philippe, all his legal training coming to his rescue, replied, "Right, sir, but then I must insist that you include in the wording of the punishment the fact that it was meted out because I carried out a reconnaissance in daylight behind the enemy lines." The Major changed his mind.

Of course, I knew nothing of all this at the time. I was at home, railing at my baby for not appearing and myself for being fool enough to marry a man who thought more of getting a medal than being with his wife at such a time. Our regular doctor had gone to the army and there was left only an old fuddy-duddy whose value I regarded as being highly questionable. I did have a neighbor staying with me and a mid-wife to aid in the accouchement. It was obvious that the infant was to make

her debut momentarily and still the doctor had not arrived. At which auspicious moment, every light in house went out. And stayed out. Something had gone wrong with the plant in the village and there was no longer anyone there who knew how to fix it.

Candles were hastily found and lighted. Preoccupied as I was, at the moment, it did occur to me that this didn't offer the best possible illumination for such an occasion. And then the door opened and my mother-in-law appeared in the doorway. My blessed Me-me, with whom my long feud was carried on and who I had not seen for nearly two months, stood there carrying in her hand a paraffin lamp which shone like the north star and she hurried across to my wing of the old chateau with it. She wore only flimsiest of night gowns, obviously created far more for beauty than for warmth. The French woman does not give up easily. She was bundled off to bed again and I was left cramps and horrible visions of her getting pneumonia from her nocturnal pilgrimage, when the doctor arrived. Two minutes later Diane made her appearance.

I can't possible tell you how fiendishly cold it was in that enormous chateau. Once the baby was born, everybody was very busy looking after me until I noticed my small daughter, lying on a couch.. She looked perfectly fine except for the unfortunate fact that her face was a ghastly blue. My rather weary eyes had fallen on her just in time. The mid-wife hastily gathered the baby up in her arms and held her in the very hollow of the enormous fireplace in the adjoining room, bringing her back to

life over the tiny fire burning in it. A little later my infant daughter was returned to me, warm and well, but with the scotiest face any baby ever boasted.

Two days later the house caught on fire. I recommend this as a tonic to any woman recovering from childbirth. Nothing is so calculated to make one want to recover sufficiently to leave one's bed. Poor Andre, valourously stoking the old furnace with firewood, had done his best. But his best was far too good.

I was asleep when I heard strange noises going on beneath me in the furnace room...voices and footsteps. I guessed what was up. I rang but no one came. I thought hastily of how beautifully all these rooms, wood-panelled in the days of Louis XVI, so that the wood was now well aged, would burn, but decided I had better stay in bed where I belonged. I rang again and still no one came. I couldn't stand it any longer so got up and went into the next room where the baby lay and brought her into bed with me. By this time the smoke was beginning to come through invisible cracks in the floor. To occupy myself I started writing a letter to Philippe, frozen somewhere in an "avant poste." I, at least, was warm. Perhaps I should soon be far too warm.

My English Nana appeared to assure me, with typical British faith in the authorities, that there was nothing to worry about. She had sent for the fire department. Of course, by now, all the pipes were bright red and the furnace itself was giving an astounding impersonation of a Chinese Dragon, belching and snorting flame in the fiercest manner, but the fire department

would soon be here. She, for herself, was at a loss to know what they could do since the furnace room was too hot to enter.

Half an hour later I heard a great commotion and the welcome voices of men. At last, the fire department to the rescue. But not at all. Our blessed Rene, home on leave, had arrived at the psychological moment. He removed all the fire from the furnace, the pipes cooled, and the danger was over. Next morning the fire department rang up to ask if the fire was out or did we still need its assistance. In the excitement of getting the men off to the army no one had bothered much about reorganizing the civilian life of the community.

Two days later I was out of bed and going about my business and, a week or so later, my father arrived in some miraculous way. He is an English industrial, and was, I believe, en route to Switzerland on business. He duly approved of the baby, gave Pierre five pounds, and insisted that I should come up to Paris with him for a few days. I was terrified to go for fear I would miss a few precious moments with Philippe, who might be coming home on leave at any moment. But, in the end, Paris proved irresistible. I suppose no woman ever spent a stranger three days in that enchanting place. I knew Philippe must pass through the city on his way to Normandie and I also knew, if I had any understanding of my handsome husband, that no even the thoughts of wife and children.. even a brand new child...could keep him from getting thoroughly clean. He would never be able to resist a Turkish bath. So my time in Paris was spent principally in dashing frenziedly from

one such establishment to the other, leaving word in each for Philippe if he should appear.

Daddy took me on a shopping spree and, among other things, presented me with the most beautiful scarf from 'Hermes' that I had ever seen. How grateful I was to be for that square of gaily colored silk.

I hurried home and still no sign of Philippe, except a bottle of perfume for me and a rattle for the baby. Late in February he arrived to greet his daughter, now seven weeks old.

And still unchristened. Me-me and I had found a really worthy bone of contention with which to occupy ourselves during the tedium of waiting for Philippe. We could not agree whether the Cure was to sit at my right hand or hers at the christening breakfast. Naturally, in the face of an impasse such as this, the christening must wait. Poor Philippe, worn out from his time in the front lines with the men of the Midi, arrived to face this crisis. I don't think anything could have given him more of a feeling of being home.

It seems that Philippe and I were always to be faced with what seemed very tragic to us at the time. Both he and I were very fond of music and the night of his arrival some British officers stationed nearby came to call. We staged an impromptu concert since one of our guests was a magnificent pianist. I had been something of a singer, though months had gone by since last I sang. Now, for two hours, I bellowed my idiot lungs out and then, the guests departed, nothing would do but that Philippe and I must

take a romantic stroll in the crisp night air under the bright moonlight through the long avenues of trees. Results: next morning Philippe found himself with a wife whose voice resembled nothing but the hearse croak of a very mournful frog. This rasping whisper stayed with me throughout his leave to brighten our moments together.

For the last three days of his leave, we went to Paris where flu caught up with us both. We would neither of us give in to it and lived on a thoroughly satisfactory, if somewhat execrable, diet of quinine and champagne. And we got the boots. Which brings me exactly to the point I started from. A technique I must have adopted from the French army.

Busy as I was, the hours after Philippe's departure were incredibly long. Each year a certain amount of the wood on the estate had to be sold and it was now time for the annual chopping so the charcoal burners and I spent long days in the woods, picking out the trees to be chopped down. I told the men not to sell the wood until the fall when the price would be better. I wonder if it was ever paid for. And, if it was, who got the money.

But my mind was only half on the things I had to do. The other half was always preoccupied with the wonderful plot Philippe and I had hatched.

For some obscure reason, the army looked with tacit approval on the custom long established of officers having their "petites amies" come to visit them, though the severest penalties

awaited the man who dared to permit his wife nearby. This has always remained a distinction beyond my understanding. However, if I could visit Philippe as a "girl friend" and not as a wife, that was all right with me. As a matter of fact, the whole venture had a clandestine sound to it that made it doubly attractive. I suppose every wife, at one time or another, has wondered what it would be like to be "the other woman." I was going to have a chance to find out...and with my own husband.

After a few weeks a letter arrived from Monsieur Delatre the mayor of a little town in the east of France. It offered me a position as tutor to his five daughters. He was, it appeared, most anxious that they should learn English. I could only conclude that the writer had lost his mind. Then, fortunately, what little sanity I possess asserted itself. I rushed for a map. Where was this village? There. And where was Philippe? There. Only a few kilometers away. Suddenly it was crystal clear. Philippe himself did not dare write me since his letter might be examined and he had trusted me to understand. The letter from the mayor explained where I was going and why and, since I was English, the offer of the job sounded perfectly legitimate.

Armed with my letter, the next morning at dawn I started driving for Pontbec some six hundred kilometers away, approximately 375 miles. I was terrified of being stopped and turned back for lack of proper papers, as obviously I could not show a carte d'indentite showing me to be the wife of a Frenchman and, in the other hand, a letter offering me a job as an English governess.

However, I was stopped only twice in the entire distance -- once near my own village where I was recognized and waved on, and again near Chateau Thierry. Here I waved my letter, spoke in very loud English, giving as good an imitation as I could of my own countrymen who always seem to feel the way to make themselves understood in a foreign country is to shout loudly in their own language. I think more to get away from the ceaseless sound of my voice than anything else, the guard passed me and I sped on, straight across France to where Philippe was stationed, in an enchanting little village on the bend of the Doubs River. Beside it was the mayor's house, and enchanting old mill, and the village school with a cluster of small houses on the other side, across an old bridge. The mayor and his wife, in whose home Philippe was quartered, turned out to be warm and generous, enjoying as much as I the romantic masquerade that had been forced on me.

And what a change in Philippe. All the disillusion and bitterness had left him, for, on returning to his regiment, he found the Colonial army had been reorganized and, in each division, two regiments had been filled with Senegalese tirailleurs, augmented only by a few white specialists. Only the pick of the white officers had been retained and Philippe, to his great delight, was included among those selected to serve with these men from Africa, whose tremendous bravery was matched only by their magnificent dignity. The golden spurs would soon be his.

These tirailleurs were, with the Chasseurs Alpins and one or two other divisions, the pride of the French army. And, in

this day when so little that is good is said of France, let it be said here that they stood as a monument to the democratic soul of that country. In these divisions there was never any difference between men because of the color of their skin. My husband, a French nobleman, was a lieutenant, serving gladly, under a Captain who was coal-black. Under my husband served native sergeants who respected and obeyed him, not because he was white but because he was their lieutenant.

This captain was a fascinating figure. No man has ever terrified me as much. Since he is dead I can, without fear of hurting him, tell you of him. His name was L. Mailleraye and he was a grandson of King Denis of the Gabon who ceded his country to France under Louis Philippe. He was incredibly ugly, short and almost ape-like in his movements, and known throughout all of Africa for his tremendous personal bravery. His eyes were almost hypnotic in their intensity and he would, by the hour, tell us stories of Africa...particularly of the witch doctors and their wondrous powers. I was more than half sure he was a witch doctor himself and constantly feared that I would incur his displeasure and get a curse put upon me. But I need not have worried. Before I left he paid me the greatest compliment in his power. He ordered a "tam-tam" in my honor. Nothing could ever be more unreal than the serious shining faces of the Senegalese, grouped around a campfire, as they listened raptly to the strange rhythm of the improvised drums, hastily commandeered gasoline cans and kettles, echoing through the French hills. Then, slowly, they

began to move, almost imperceptibly at first, like the first faint stirrings of a wind across desert sand. Gradually the tempo of their movements increased until they were whirling dervishes, their clothes stripped from them, their shining bodies gleaming in the brightness of the fire, everything forgotten in the passion of the dance. No longer were they tirailleurs. They were Africans again, back in their native surroundings, answering some strange call that only they could hear. Suddenly, and without warning, La Mailleraye stopped the drummers. The dancers froze in their positions, arms raised, one foot off the ground, every muscle tense and strained. That strange, almost macabre picture held for a moment and then they relaxed and were again the familiar faces of the troops. La Mailleraye assured me that, had he not stopped the music at that moment, the men would have danced for eight days and eight nights, until they dropped of exhaustion, and no power on earth could have stopped them.

La Mailleraye was extremely cordial to me because I was an Englishwoman and he had great respect for the English. Now, when British Imperialism is such a symbol for all that is degraded, I think with some comfort of what this African prince told me.

"My grandfather, King Denis," he said, "was approached by both the British and French governments for cession of his country; by treaty. Queen Victoria sent him an envoy with a very handsome present of an enormous gold chain, which he always wore with great pride. But Louis Philippe found a better way to the old man's heart. He decorated him with the Legion d'Honneur, then still

resplendent in the full prestige of the Napoleonic era. The King made favorable trade agreements with the British and ceded his country to the French. BUT..even today...all our best young people go to work in some English possession where conditions are far better and justice far more fairly dispensed. Then, after ten or fifteen years, they come home to retire in French land where they know they are not despised for the color of their skin, even though they are exploited unfairly."

In these few words seems to lie the whole difference between French and British colonial administration. The French instinctively recognized the human dignity of their subjects but their shrewd business instincts made it inevitable that they should exploit them. The British, on the other hand, were never able to forget that they were "pukka sahibs" with a position to maintain but their sense of fair play made them treat their subjects far more decently. The French would educate but the British would provide. If only the decent qualities of the two administrations could ever have been combined in one.

My husband's orderly was an enormous man, more than six feet tall and proportionately broad. His name was Mama Bakaru and he was the gentlest, sweetest, person I have ever known in my life. He adored Philippe and we were both devoted to him. Though I confess my own affection wavered each morning when the first faint light of dawn would bring his gentle tap at our bedroom door, followed by his softly spoken, "Dost thou stir?" Like a child, he

felt it was time we were up and, if we were, he wanted to be with us.

One afternoon he found me ironing some of my clothes and insisted I teach him this wonderful art. He beamed with pride in his new accomplishment and the picture of that enormous man, the iron suddenly grown tiny in his big paw, laboriously ironing my underclothes is one I shall long remember. When it came time for me to leave he said farewell to me. "Thou must not fear, Mistress. No harm will come to thy husband while I live." How true he was to his promise.

These Africans suffered untold tortures with the cold. No room could be hot enough for them. Hundreds of them died of pneumonia because they kept their shelters as hot as they could get them and then, when they had to go out, the cold would be too great a shock. The nurses and doctors were in a frenzy because the hospital was an old building that had been commandeered. It had to be kept at a frightful temperature for the blacks but there was no plumbing of any kind in the building so the men would have to go outdoors, amounting to virtual suicide. The mayor's wife, his daughters, and I scoured the countryside searching for makeshift receptacles that the army should have provided.

During my stay orders came through to prepare for some extremely important maneuvers. Three light tanks turned up one fine morning and orders were issued to stage an attack with two companies. No one knew exactly what the supposed situation was and the tanks had no coordinated orders how to support the troops. A miserable an-

chaotic show naturally ensued, at the end of which the colonel called his officers before him and hemmed and hawed roughly as follows: "You see, gentlemen, how important it is to have tanks in an offensive operation. You managed very well but there was some hesitancy whether to let the tanks precede you and then rush the enemy or whether you should mingle with the tanks and get over the whole operation while the enemy is surprised. These are the two solutions that can be adopted. We must choose one and stick to it." The maneuvers continued for some time and, at the end of them, no conclusion had been reached in that division at least, or, I presume, in the whole French army. However, the question was purely academic as, from the time the Germans invaded Holland until the armistice, Philippe never saw another French tank. The men responsible for the fall of France have not yet faced the court at Riom.

Meantime, I was learning that being a "girl friend" was extremely pleasant. Of course I was always addressed Madame de Benespoir, just as any woman there was called by the name of the officer she was visiting. I had to be doubly careful not to let my real identity slip out since it would not only get Philippe into serious trouble but it would also embarrass the other "petites amies" to have a wife in their midst. And to the small store of worldly knowledge I possess was here added one interesting feature. While it is considered perfectly all right, in fact rather complimentary, for a man to at least attempt to make love to another man's wife, no gentleman would ever dream of making an advance to another man's "girl friend". There are certain phases of male

psychology beyond mere woman's comprehension. How Philippe and I used to laugh at the thought of how his fellow officers would feel if we ever met them after the war with their real wives. Poor fellows, I hope their widows will not begrudge them what little pleasure they may have found in those forbidden moments.

My masquerade came to a rude end with the invasion of Norway. After all, I was a mother as well as a "girl friend". I rushed home and, two days behind me, came Philippe. Even in the face of this new development leaves were being granted. We had seven short days together, playing with the children, working in the garden, being ourselves. Then he went back to his tirailleurs. That was on May 2nd. One week later the Germans invaded the low countries. The phoney war was over. Now the battle was on.

And of that eight months of phoney war I must say one word. For twenty years the French and British, and, if I may say so, the Americans, too, anxious for peace and security, had deluded themselves into believing that they could win a war simply by defending themselves. They believed Gamelin's "whoever is the first to leave his shell in this war is going to be badly hurt" and ridiculed the doctrine of a provenly greater soldier, old Marshall Foch whose strident cry was ever "Attaquez!" During those long months the men of France, for the most part, and the men of Britain, ill equipped as they were, yearned to measure their strength against the Germans. But in that period of indecision there was only one voice in a position of authority raised

to speak their hopes. That was the voice of Charles de Gaulle. The High Command took pains not to hear him. We know, now, only too well, that if they had and the allies had moved against the still unfertilized Siegfried Line while the Germans were concentrating on Poland, the war would now be over and the ghastly debacle that has since ensued would never have occurred. No, truly, the guilty men have not yet been called to justice.

And the parallel is not found wanting here in America. Here too was the hope that the war could be won by making this country an "Arsenal of democracy" but never running any real risk. The price of that false hope was Pearl Harbor and Singapore, the Dutch Indies and the Philippines and Corregidor. The democracies tried to live on hopes. The totalitarian countries lived on realities. Foch gave them the key but they would not use it. As he said of the Prussian dispositions before Gravelotte, "A general with the simplest knowledge of war would have been able to upset the most careful plans by a resolute advance."

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On May 10th, 1940, just before dawn, the Germans started their invasion of the low countries. On the 13th, I was busy at the Creche in our village. It was a Monday and the weekly period for the weighing and examining of children. We worked directly opposite the railway station and were suddenly startled to hear the station bell ringing. In a tiny village such as ours the arrival of an unexpected train was an event. We rushed across to see what it was and thus witnessed for the first time what was to become an all too familiar sight in the next few days. It was the first flight of refugees coming through from the north, from Holland and Belgium. The train was a queer antiquated affair, very high and extremely dirty, with a string of cattle cars at the end. Hundreds of hands protruded from every opening. Old hands, worn hands, babies' hands, dying hands. And a horrible cacaphony of voices all pleading for food and drink. We rushed around and gathered what we could for these poor derelicts. They had come only a few score miles, yet were unable to make themselves understood, speaking only Flemish or Dutch. But one cry above all others was heard over and over again. Asperin. Poor tragic people, they hadn't learned that no amount of asperin could stop the dread pain from which they suffered. The train stopped only a moment or so, while we gave them what we could, and then it was gone. As it pulled out they all cried "Vive La France," and we, with tears in our eyes, called back "Vive La Belgique."

From then on the trains, or rather cattle trucks poured in at half hour intervals, each one more crowded, more filthy than the last. The farmers worked all day and all night, hauling

milk and butter and eggs to the station to feed the refugees. We had no idea that we would soon be refugees ourselves. How could we? The French army stood to stop the invaders at the Meuse.

It was difficult to reach the frantic hands that stretched out from the one opening in the middle of the cattle cars. So we helpers began boarding the trains, trying to deliver our pitiful little stores of supplies. The terror and horror of those cars was beyond belief. There was no straw, the people lying on the bare boards. I saw a feeble hand groping on the floor in the semi-darkness and stooped down to investigate. It belonged to an emaciated woman, so weak she could not speak. Clutched in one arm was her baby. The baby was two days old.

To add to the nightmarish quality of the whole thing, a merciful providence would sometimes intercede to let some poor unfortunate escape from the horror. In car after car we would find these men and women, no longer aware of their surroundings and free of conscious suffering, their mad cackling laughter rising in a shrill crescendo above the tortured moans of their companions who still could feel and know.

As the days went on, the condition of the passengers became more and more pitiful. These once sturdy men and women, farmers, shopkeepers, decent everyday citizens like you and me, became crazed maniacs, grasping with claw-like hands at anything that came within their reach. I had gotten a black eye and my clothes were torn from me time and again as I tried to hand out

the little food that we could get for them. Poor tragic people, they didn't know what they were doing. All they knew was that they saw food and food was life and life still was dear.

The most tragic of all these people were the mothers and children who had become separated, probably never to be reunited in this world.

One little boy, not over eight years old, was leaning over the side of one of the cars, pleading for food, when the train started with a sudden jerk. The child was thrown to the tracks, both legs broken. He was taken off to an emergency hospital, but the train was signalled on, his mother unable to fight her way off. Where were they to meet again?

After the 19th of May the trains no longer stopped. A train standing in a station made too good a target and, by this time, the air was thick with German planes. But the roads were an endless stream of every conceivable kind of conveyance on wheels; bicycles with trailers, tricycles, farm wagons, trucks of all kinds, furniture vans, coal carts. The weirdest sight was the funeral hearses, crammed with living human freight. One morning eight of these passed through our village. It gave one a queer feeling in the pit of the stomach.

The Chateau, of course, was jammed with refugees. The day after the invasion began, a friend of mine, with her two children, came to stay. She was an Englishwoman like myself, married to a French naval officer. Her home was even closer to the border than my own and she had come to us for refuge. Behind her came dozens of others. We slept about in halls, anywhere, the house com

completely over-run.

Among our guests one night was a Belgian colonel who arrived on the 18th, with two lieutenants and three soldiers. Six men in all. They were all that was left of a regiment of three thousand.

Colonel Diaz had been stationed on the Meuse. He tried repeatedly to tell me what had happened, but would burst into uncontrollable tears whenever he attempted it. From one of his men I learned the whole tragic story. The colonel, in charge of a salient, had issued orders for the destruction of bridges and setting of obstacles to stop the Germans. Due either to confusion or deliberate sabotage, not one of his orders had been obeyed. The bridges were left intact for the Germans to roll over and nothing was done to impede them. He and the little band that arrived with him had ultimately escaped capture by climbing into apple trees and hiding there while the German tanks rumbled through the orchard beneath them. Then, somehow, they made their way through the German lines and got as far as Normandie. More extraordinary, they had managed to bring with them their regimental flag. It stood in a place of honor in our drawing room and I never saw one of those Belgian soldiers enter or leave the room without saluting it. It had an almost sacred significance for them. Some day they would carry it back to their own country. They only stayed the night. They hoped to join up with the French army and continue the battle. I have no idea what became of them.

Of course, by now, the air raids were getting pretty heavy and the nights particularly were a torment. Every plane

in the German Luftwaffe seemed to make the sky over our Chateau a rendezvous, flying in from all directions, circling the house, signalling to one another with machine gun fire and flying off again. Me-me deduced the explanation. Those lovely avenues of trees leading up to the house, of which we were so proud, pointed due east and west, as reliable as a compass itself, providing perfect directional guides to the Germans. Once we knew, how we longed to cut them down.

Of course, at this time, I had no idea where Philippe was. I did know the colonial army had been rushed up to the north but whether it was trapped in Flanders or on the Meuse, I had no idea.

On the 21st, M. La Rose, our neighbor, came to see me. He and his wife were close friends of ours, in fact he was little Diane's godfather, and he wanted me to know he felt it time to leave. He wanted me to leave too. I refused. My friend was frantic to leave as she realized that our positions as English subjects would be even worse than that of the French if the enemy broke through.

Philippe and I had seen pictures of station wagons in American magazines and been captivated by them. The best we had been able to get was an old baker's wagon which we had converted into our idea of one of those vehicles. She urged me to pack this and start in the morning. But I still could not make up my mind to go. I still could not believe that the Germans could get through.

The next day...the 22nd...I went down to the village to get money. There are no banks in the villages in France as there are in America. One entrusts one's money to the lawyer or some other dignitary and he keeps it in his safe. When I got to the lawyer's office I discovered his old clerk, a man of about sixty, was in charge, since his chief has been mobilized. In his anxiety to keep my money safe, he had sent it in to the bank in Dieppe. When he discovered I had come for it, he and the lawyer's young wife announced they would go into the town, several miles away, and get it. They left at ten in the morning. By noon I was frantic as wild reports began reaching us that Dieppe was in flames and I was sure that I had allowed those two nice people to walk into an inferno.

They got back safely at six that night and told me that there had only been slight damage to the harbor. As they were talking to me a refugee on the street began screaming about the horrible ruins of Dieppe. The girl who had been there slapped her full in the face. "That, Madame, is to teach you not to spread lies," she said.

That midnight my friend and I listened to the British Broadcasting Co. news account. It was our only source of information. The worst had happened. The Germans had broken through and were heading for the sea. The railway line ran through our village and they would soon be on us. Me-me was with us at the time and insisted I must leave. She vividly remembered 1914-15 and did not want the children to have to live under the occupation. By candle-light

we packed, principally food, soap, blankets, warm clothes for the children. I took no clothes at all. There remained the very serious problem of fuel. We had some petrol that Philippe had wisely procured, which we had to take with us. The most likely container seemed to be a "bom-bom," a receptacle that is used, I think, nowhere but in France. It is made of glass and is used for wine. It holds about 100 liters. That is roughly 25 gallons. We filled it with the precious fuel and, such is the strength that one gathers in an emergency, my friend and I alone hoisted it into that baker's car. Days later when the action had to be repeated it took four strong soldiers to do it.

During the night M. La Rose arrived again. He was in his car, ready to start with his wife and his four children, a mattress on top of the car. With him was his sister-in-law who had just arrived. There was no room for her in his car though he was able to take her eight year old son. I said we would make room for her and the La Rose's set off after making a rendezvous to meet us the following morning at a crossroads we both knew.

Our new guest seemed a very calm and practical woman and volunteered to take charge of stowing the luggage. I eagerly accepted her offer, explaining that we had each been limited to one suitcase. Mine was filled to the brim with chocolate, oranges, sugar, etc. The children's was jammed with their clothes.

The children's nurse had gone completely gaga in this crisis and refused to do anything except berate me for my stupidity in marrying a Frenchman and coming to live in this benighted country.

Not one shred of help could we get from her. I meditated momentarily on leaving her behind, but she was the first one in the wagon, settling herself firmly, and continuing her tirade.

Up to the very last I tried to argue my mother-in-law into coming with us. But she was obdurate. This was her home and here she would remain. In the end she won our feud. She was left in command of the field of battle.

At four in the morning we started. I was the only driver. In the car was my English friend with her two children, Diane, four and a half months old, rode in a basket on top of the luggage and my little Pierre, not yet quite three, sat up in the front beside me, his little eyes fixed on the road pointing out every obstruction in case I didn't see it in the half-light.

My first object was to get across the Seine. I felt sure that once on the other side of the river, the children would be safe. Don't forget that the Maginot line and the "best army in Europe" stood between us the Germans. These names still had a magic significance to us in France. And, even if the enemy should infiltrate into the country, never would they be allowed to get beyond the Seine. Those bridges would surely be destroyed. So we thought.

We started so early because we thought we would avoid a certain amount of traffic. And, after all, it was no distance to the river....a matter of only seventeen miles. That seventeen miles took us exactly seven hours.

I could not have stopped, even if I had wanted to. Once in that line of traffic, one must keep moving, regardless of what happened. I could not even stop to feed the baby, poor lamb. She was crying with hunger. Nana was incapable of doing anything except moan about her own troubles. My friend did, I think, manage to unpack a little food and feed her and the other children once. But I can't remember accurately.

I do recall that, once across the river, I thought things would be better. And then the bombers came. The noise they made as they swooped down on us was something from another world. So much by now has been written of the German technique of attaching sirens to their planes to add horror to the bombing that it is futile for me to add more. But even now...two years later...the sound is sharp and distinct in my consciousness. The havoc that these planes created is indescribable. The refugees, obeying instinct, pulled their cars from the road or left them where they stood and hurled themselves into the ditches. I was frantic as I knew it was impossible to get the baby in her basket into the ditch. And then my fear vanished. Where the knowledge came from I shall never know, but quite suddenly I knew with complete clarity that the Germans would not bomb the roads. They wouldn't want to damage them. So I pulled my car out of the line of traffic and kept going while the helpless people in the ditches were machine-gunned and bombed into nothingness.

From the time the planes appeared not only Nana but also M. La Rose's sister-in-law was hysterical. Poor woman, I cannot blame her. You will remember that her little son was in another

car with the La Rose's and she was sure that he had been killed. One lesson I learned from the war in France. Do not be separated from those you love. Death is far easier to face if you are all together. And there was one other very curious thing about my reactions to that bombing. I am, I think, a normal mother with the normal devotion to my children. They were there beside me, but throughout the whole episode my anxiety was not for them but for that enormous "bom-bom" of petrol in the back of the car. All I could think of was a bomb hitting it.

Late in the afternoon we came to the cross-roads where we had a rendezvous with the La Rose's. They, poor people, were incapable of speech. Just sat in their car sobbing soundlessly. They too had miraculously escaped but had seen another car, filled with friends of theirs, bombed and set afire, their friends burned alive without a chance to escape from the flaming car. I insisted that his sister-in-law should join her son, even if luggage had to be tossed out to make room for her. And when she left us I discovered why she had volunteered to oversee the packing of our wagon. While we had been limited to one suitcase apiece, she had managed to stow four of hers into the van. When she drove off with the La Rose's they were all left on the roadside for anyone to have.

I tried desperately to avoid all towns and main roads, knowing they would be the target for the bombers. But I couldn't waste too much time. I had to get south. By six that night I was physically incapable of driving another inch. We reached

a little village called Conches and I gave out. I had been driving fifteen hours and, all told, had covered a little over eighty miles. And throughout that entire day we had never once been stopped to show papers of any kind. We could just as well have been German saboteurs as refugees.

It was impossible to find a room of any kind in the village but we did manage to find a shed on a little farm outside the village. It was boarded up at only two ends but there was straw on the ground. It was beginning to rain by this time and even that little bit of shelter looked like Heaven to us. We had a small alcohol lamp with us and Nana tried to light it but she was so nervous she only succeeded in spilling the contents and setting the straw on fire. Two of the lovely blankets I had brought to keep us warm went to put out that conflagration.

We fed the children as best we could, though they were far from satisfied. The greatest problem was to find water for them. In France there is no water on the farms except rainwater collected in barrels. The peasants live on cider, undoubtedly a delicious drink but not recommended for an infant unused to it. The French babies apparently thrived on it.

The children fell asleep from exhaustion and my friend and I, though famished, dared not eat any of the children's supplies. Nana seemed to have got her senses back so we left the children in her care and set off for the village to find food. We had to go only a few hundred yards but before we could make it a fearful

thunderstorm broke. We fled into a little bistro, but it was filled with such rough looking people we didn't dare stay even long enough to order a drink. The storm looked preferable to the company, so we started back for the shed, still unfed. When we got there we were both seeping wet. I took off my suit...found a dry slip...and put an old mackintosh on over that. We tapped our slender store of food and each ate a chocolate bar. The shed had gradually filled up with weary men, bedraggled remnants of the French and Belgian armies. A pistol clutched firmly in my hand, I settled down to sleep. It was freezing cold and, shivering frightfully, I put my hands into the pockets of my coat for warmth. In one of them I found the lovely scarf that Daddy had bought me that day in Paris. And suddenly I remembered Philippe's Senegalese. They had always been cold and Philippe and I had laughed so much at the way they always tied towels around their heads. Perhaps they knew what they were doing. Round my own head went the scarf and almost immediately I began to feel warmer. It is a curious fact that if you keep your head warm you feel warm all over.

I dozed off then but only for a few minutes. I was awakened by the din of an inferno. The bombers were over us and dropping their explosives. It was pitch black and all we could see was the explosion of the bombs, a few yards away. Our little shelter shook and rattled and I was sure would collapse on us at any moment. But, for a wonder, it held. When the dawn broke I discovered what had brought the planes. Our haven of refuge was

right beside a railway line, and this little village happened to be an important railway junction-- I found out later. We got out of there as quickly as possible. The children slept soundly throughout the bombing.

It was five in the morning when we left and we drove in the same interminable line of traffic until we got to Chartres. There we did pause long enough to wash our faces in the fountain in front of the cathedral.

After Chartres, the road began to clear a little and by mid-afternoon we reached Blois. This was real progress. We had covered 150 miles in the day.

Between Chartres and Blois, we had a puncture. Before the little wagon could be jacked up to change the tire, we had to get the "bom-bom" out. Some villagers helped us and I set to work valiantly on the tire. My activities seemed to attract an enormous amount of attention and I gradually became conscious that I was surrounded by what appeared to be the entire French army. Even allowing for the interest that anyone working has for those with nothing to do, it did seem they were strangely fascinated. My pre-occupation was rudely shattered when I heard little Pierre explaining to a soldier that "Mummy got her dress wet in the storm and it isn't dry yet." With horror I realized that I was working away in a very short slip and a mackintosh which was slit up the back to the waist. To the applause of the soldiers I fled into the van, leaving the tire for them to change while I put on my skirt, wet or not.

We were fortunate enough to find one room in the hotel at Blois for the seven of us...three adults and four children. The baby was feverish, it was the tenth day after her vaccination, and one of the other children had been frightfully car sick. But the next day we pushed on to a little village on the banks of the Indre which I shall call Chateaublanc. I had an American friend there and I thought she might be able to help me find decent lodgings where the children could be properly fed and taken care of. But she insisted that we move into her home. I didn't want to do this but she said if I didn't, other refugees would, so we accepted. No one could have been kinder to us than she was. I, woman-like, collapsed as soon as I knew we were safe, and stayed in bed for three days, completely exhausted. My body could rest but not my mind. No one knew whether the French line was holding or not. And I had no idea where Philippe was or if he was dead or alive.

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On June 3rd I went back to Normandie. I had to get more things for the children, for Nana, and my friend; but, if I am to be honest, I was grateful for the excuse. I was desperate to get news of Philippe and, if any word had come from him, it would be at our home. The children were now safe. Chanteaublanc was miles to the south of Paris...utterly beyond the range of any possible danger. My English friend and my Nana had decided to leave for England and on my return I would take them as far as Tours and from there they would go by themselves to St. Malo where, on June 10th, they sailed for England by the last refugee boat. My hostess protested against my going back, though she was as confident as I that the Germans would be held at the Somme. So, borrowing a bicycle, I pedalled the forty kilometers into the nearest town, Lebec. There I hoped to get a train for Paris and, from there, another train back home. I could not go by car as the little petrol we had was too precious to use and the trains were now less crowded.

When I reached the railway station, I was refused a ticket. One required a special pass to go north. I searched the town until I found the Commandant of Police and explained my problem to him without avail until I mentioned that my husband was with the colonial troops. The magic word had been spoken. He, too, once had served with the Senegalese, and were not his own sons even now with the Colonials. It was unpardonable that the wife of an officer of these troops should be interfered with. His gray moustaches bristling fiercely, he

marched me back to the station, bought a ticket as though he himself were going to Paris, and stayed beside me until the train arrived. With great courtliness, he found me a place and settled me in it, saluted, begged me to convey his respects to my so gallant husband, and departed. As he reached the platform the sirens screamed. Boche planes were overhead. From my window I watched him. For a moment he stood there, hesitant. Then, his shoulders erect, he turned and, with an imperious wave of the hand to the engineer, ordered the train from the station. With that enchantingly impertinent whistle of all trains in France we charged forth valiantly, into the air raid...into it and through it...the bombs tearing up the tracks we had just passed over. Had we stayed in the station we should all have been killed. To you, M. le Commandant, my thanks. Your messages were conveyed to my husband. Some day he will come back to return the compliment.

That night I arrived in Paris just in time to enjoy its first and only air raid of the entire war. Even now it was still Paris. The enemy was beyond the Somme. Well, they had been there in the last war. Paris was safe.

And the next day I got home. Me-me came to the station in the pony cart and we fell into each other's arms. In an instant, I knew I had been right to come back. There was news of Philippe. The day after I left he had telephoned. He could not tell his mother where he was beyond the fact that he was on the Somme. At least he was alive. And, suddenly, so was I.

The morning after my arrival I was awakened a little after five by pebbles being tossed against my window. Outside were two little farm boys. They had important news. A German plane had crashed in a nearby field. Even as they were telling me, Me-me appeared in my room. From her windows she had seen two Germans pass the gate lodge and enter the woods. I rushed to the phone to report to the police station but the word had already reached there. Men were on the way. The two lads outside wanted to borrow guns so they could hunt for the Boches in the woods before they could escape. I spent a priceless ten minutes hunting for buck shot, pulled on heavy boots and a coat over my night gown, and charged out to do battle with the enemy. In my own mind at that moment, I am afraid, I was very Joan of Arc'ish. I gave guns to my little troop...and we raced off down the driveway. But only a few yards. One of my heavy boots caught in the hem of my night gown and there I was, sprawling on my face in the dust. Joan of Arc never went rushing off to save her country in a night gown. I urge all women in time of emergency to wear pajamas.

We started to track the Germans but without success, and at eight o'clock the police arrived. I retired to dress more appropriately for the occasion. About nine a detachment of troops from Dieppe put in their appearance. I gave a map of our estate to the Lieutenant in command, told him the most logical hiding places for the Germans, took the police around and posted them at the corners of the grounds, and then everything being in

the hands of the experts, went back to the house to resume my packing.

At one o'clock the Captain of the Aviation police, the Captain of the Gendarmes, and the young Lieutenant appeared. They were ready for lunch. We did them as well as we could.... an omelette, fresh dier, bread and cheese. And as we ate, I learned to my horror that, in spite of the maps, they had been busy scouring our neighbor's fields instead of ours. I asked permission to organize the afternoon search, which was readily granted...squared off the fields and assigned a soldier and a villager to each square and we beat the fields and woods just as if we were after game. But too much time had been wasted. Our quarry had escaped us. How easy it must have been for them. How little idea we had of what to do. At one time during the search I came on a motor lorry...the ignition key in the switch, all ready to run, and no guard within a hundred yards. If the Germans had come on it, instead of I, they could have climbed in, started the motor, and driven the length of France in perfect security behind the protection of the army insignia.

On the sixth I was driven from my home. Not by the Germans, but by my mother-in-law and the farmers. Their French souls were horrified that children should be separated from their mother. I must return to them. Firmly Me-me drove me to the station and put me on the train southward. I remember looking back at the rhedendrons I had planted with such loving care and wondering how much they would have grown when I would

see them again. I am still wondering. With me went my trunk, packed with canned food, soap, sugar and clothes for the children. Me-me still would not leave. She promised that if the Germans did break through at the Somme, she would leave with the village doctor and join me in Chateaublanc. I asked her to burn all my old diaries and to guard Philippe's pair of guns, and, above all, his precious boots with the golden spurs. I squeezed myself into the already jammed train...every inch of space occupied with passengers and bicycles..and we pulled out of the station. Me-me stood on the platform waving adieu. It was my last glimpse of her and of the village that for three years had been my home. I did not know it then but I was on the last train to pass through the village before the Germans came. On the following day the village was heavily bombed. And two days later, on the 9th, the Germans entered the village. The Somme had been passed. I was back in Chateaublanc when I learned this and heard over the radio that the Germans were in Forge-les-eaux. This was to the south of our village so I knew it was occupied. As for Philippe, he must either have been killed or badly wounded. He had always said he would never allow himself to be taken prisoner. I knew he meant it. I had little illusions of what would happen to my outspoken husband in a prison camp.

As soon as the Germans occupied our village, a group of billeting officers came to our Chateau. They marched into the house with drawn pistols and ordered Me-me to escort them through without delay. To their profound amazement they found themselves faced with the real spirit of France in the ~~form~~ of a ~~small~~ woman standing not quite five feet two.

Tartly she told them that if they wanted her to do anything they would put away their guns and speak with more politeness. This was her home and decent human behaviour was expected and demanded in it. Her eyes must have flashed more danger than the French cannon, for they obeyed. She then let them on a tour of inspection, they formed their judgments, and advised her that two hundred soldiers would move in that afternoon. As one of the officers wrote down her name in a book he looked up sharply. So she was Mme. la Baronne de Bonnespoir. They had heard of her son. He had, so far, escaped them but he would ultimately be caught and, immediately thereafter, shot. Me-me faced them with unlesened spirit.

"You have a gallant way of treating your prisoners-of-war, Messieurs," she said. "I can only hope he shoots a good many of you first."

The German smiled grimly. The firing squad was not for ordinary prisoners he explained. But his High Command, thoroughly imbued with the insidious doctrine of racial superiority had decreed that the black troops were savages and, as such, to be executed without delay. White men who would, even as officers, fight beside them were disgraces to their race and obviously unworthy of any better treatment. That afternoon the German troops moved in and were completely bewildered when Me-me slipped quietly from the house and, before they could stop her, shot all our dogs. They took the gun away from her, and it was obvious that even they regarded her with some horror for such an inhumane act. But

three days later when her son, trying to make his way through the German lines, arrived in the village and hid in his own woods near his own house there were no dogs to bark in welcome of their master.

Events moved so rapidly that now, looking back, it is almost impossible to realize that only a week after I returned to Chateaublanc and safety, we were again fugitives, fleeing the advancing enemy. In that little space of time they had crossed the Somme, the Oise, and the Seine. Paris had fallen...undefended. My hostess, whose husband was a Colonel, received word from him to evacuate their home. The French armies were to make their stand on the Loire. There the issue would be settled. We must move before the battle started.

At six o'clock on the morning of the 16th we set off. This time we didn't go south...the roads were still thick with refugees. Instead, we headed west for the coast, keeping well south of the Loire. Our destination was Les Sables d'Olonne. A woman we both knew well had a large villa there and we could stay with her until we heard from our husbands and knew of their fate and the fate of France.

We drove all day...we had punctures...we ran smack into an air raid...we ran out of gas...bought a few meagre liters for a king's ransom...and continued. Only once in that entire day were we stopped. Three old men with antiquated firearms appointed themselves a committee and were stopping all cars.

For their pains they had already captured seven German agents, moving with the refugees to spread confusion and tall tales of terror yet to come.

Darkness stopped us...still several miles from our destination....in a little village called St. Gil. My friend and her children found refuge in the home of the local lawyer... very grand and correct...the silver tray on the hall table well filled with the calling cards of the local gentry. I was more fortunate. My babies and I were taken into the home of the lawyer's cousin, as vivid a contrast as could be found. The floors were well used to the pounding of children's feet, the furniture well worn by comfortable living. How glad I was our positions were not reversed, for our lodgings were not to be temporary. We could not move any further. Both her children and mine were running temperatures from exhaustion and irregular feedings and to continue our flight would have been far too dangerous for them.

I cannot remember just when the Germans arrived but it was within a very few days. There were a few hundred French soldiers stationed in the vicinity but they had no orders and didn't know whether to fight, withdraw, or surrender. They used their own judgment and surrendered. A white flag was raised over the town to prevent bombardment and the roads were open to the enemy. The only gesture of defence that was offered was made by a few civilians who parked an automobile across the main road to prevent the Germans entering. Unfortunately, they

also left the key in it so the German officer in command, got in, started the car, and rode into town ahead of his troops, doubtless grateful to the populace for its thoughtfulness in providing him with suitable transportation. I had often wondered what sensations I would have when I first saw the enemy. Now I know. I stood in the window of the house looking out in the street, and round a bend in the road came first a procession of light tanks, then the grey-clad, grey-helmeted infantry, in grey lorries. The colorlessness of their clothes and the rigidity of their movements made them look not like men but like some strange race of robots come to destroy the world. And suddenly, uncontrollably, I was violently ill, vomiting in great body-shaking gasps of revulsion and horror. Four days later busload after busload of Germans, wearing black bowler hats, arrived. They took over the county halls, banks, and so forth. Their plans were well made.

I had only two possessions which, under all circumstances, I knew I must hang onto. One was my pistol. The other was my car. If ever again I heard of Philippe that represented my one hope of getting to him. Naturally, both these possessions were verboten. An order was posted for all civilians to register their cars with the military authorities. I drove mine into the local garage. There the garageman removed some vital part, the distributor head I think it was, hid it, and whenever the Germans showed up, blandly informed them he was awaiting a new part from Paris. They could see for themselves it would not run.

At least I had the solace of knowing it would be waiting for me when I wanted it. The little petrol I had left was put into glass jars and hidden in the attic among my host's legal archives. He and his wife were displaying incredible courage in sheltering us. As an Englishwoman, I was in a completely different position from the other refugees. If the Germans ever knew of my nationality, I would be marched straight into a concentration camp and those harboring me faced the possibility of being shot. My host knew this full well but gave shelter not only to me, but also to a young Polish girl....an even more desperate crime. The Germans would inspect the house at frequent intervals and the Polish girl was always hidden. Naturally they could not conceal me and the children. My own French was good enough to make me acceptable as a native and my hosts pretended I was a cousin of theirs, by marriage. The great danger lay in the fact that little Pierre spoke French and English indiscriminately. One word of English from his little lips and we were all doomed. What divine providence gave it to a small boy, only three years old, suddenly to understand he must cease speaking English I shall never know, but from the day the Germans entered St. Gil he spoke only in French.

When they first arrived, the invaders were very "correct" in their conduct. The officers all spoke both

French and English perfectly. The local shops did a land-office business, the Germans hurling themselves eagerly on the small supply of silk stockings, women's clothers and baby's woolens. They paid cash for all their purchases and the shopkeepers, like shopkeepers all the world over, were delighted with the sudden boom in business. They had not yet realized that the money they were receiving was quite valueless. Within a week the shops were empty and the Germans became bored with the whole pretence of correctness. From then on they just helped themselves to anything they wanted. Empty trucks were backed up to the rear of stores and houses and driven off loaded. The villagers were herded about like cattle and the heel of the military dictatorship was stamped down hard.

My host's niece, crossing the marketplace one day, was accosted by a German officer. He smiled at her and called her by her first name. She came home, very puzzled. She could not place the man and yet there was something familiar about him. But how could there be? She knew no German officers. Suddenly, she placed him. At the beginning of the war he had been billeted in her home. But at that time he wore the uniform of a French officer. No one can accuse the Germans of not being thorough in their undermining. This sort of thing must have happened all over France. No wonder the Germans could welcome my husband's regiment by name.

It must be realized that all human instincts had been trained out of these men. Going to the food cue one morning, I passed a German soldier, bare to the waist, standing stiffly at salute while an officer flogged him with a long leather whip.

He stood there, perfectly immobile, until he fell over into the street, his hand still rigid against his forehead. And, through it all, his comrades sat on the steps, polishing their guns, as if what was happening before them was the most normal occurrence in the world.

There was almost no food available and sanitary conditions were becoming almost unbearable. Choleric dysentery broke out and little Pierre came down with it. He took sick at night and I went completely berserk. All I knew was that I had to get a doctor. My poor hosts had to restrain me physically from going out into the street, forbidden after curfew. They knew my little boy might die during the night but they also knew that if I did run out...even if I did reach the doctor...he would not dare return with me and I would endanger the lives of not only my baby but also the other refugees in the house by setting forth and still have no chance of helping my little boy. His little body was burning up with fever and he was passing great quantities of blood but, mercifully, he survived, and in the morning the doctor came. For three weeks Pierre lived on rice water and sugar, which fortunately I had packed in my trunk instead of clothes. After a time he was able to eat a little rice and slowly get back some of his strength. There was no milk for the baby--when I tried to get an order for some from the German commandant I was told "Feed her on carrot juice. That's what we used in 1918."

There are these who like to tell us that the French are collaborating with the Germans and that they are the enemies

of the United Nations. It may be true of some. But in that village of St. Gil everyone knew that I was English, yet no one spoke of it. When I got my ration card it was through lies and subterfuge. They all lied with me. When, finally, the news reached us of the British attack on the French fleet in Oran, my host turned pale and stood silent for a moment. Then, very softly, he said, "It must have been necessary." Months later, when I saw a train of food sent from America for the French being moved across France to feed the Germans, an old peasant, weak from hunger, said to me, "If ever you reach America, Madame, tell them to send no food. We would rather starve than have food come to us if even a little part of it goes to feed the enemy."

This period was my zero hour. I could get no word of my father, of Me-me, nor, of course, of Philippe. On July 30th word finally reached me that he was alive. It was the first word I had had of him since my trip to Normandie early in June. All through France a grapevine was operating and men and women were passing from one to the other any news they had of anyone, in the hopes that, ultimately, word would reach someone to whom it was important. With great care everyone was transmitting messages of people of whom they had never even heard. By this method I learned that Philippe had been seen in Vichy. He was scouring the unoccupied area, searching for me and the children. He knew that I had left Chateaublanc and, beyond that, nothing. It was not until the 9th of August that little

Pierre was well enough to travel again and, mad as it was to hope to pass from occupied to unoccupied France without the proper papers, I was determined to try it. I took my gasoline from the attic, my friend, the garageman, put the missing part back in my car, and I started off...keeping to the main roads, believing that w my one chance. With the German respect for rules and regulations, I felt sure they would never dream a lone woman with two children would dare to drive through the country without a pass and probably would not bother me. Twice, or perhaps three times, we were stopped while a sentry looked through the car to see that it contained no contraband and we kept on. I took wide detours whenever I heard of an important troop concentration ahead...avoided towns as much as possible...and tried not to think of the border into unoccupied France which lay ahead of me. On the second day I reached it. Soldiers barred the road and threw my luggage and provisions out on the roadside. A young lieutenant demanded my papers. I started an involved explanation of how I had lost them and was trying to get to my home in the Midi, but he afforded me no opportunity for my well rehearsed speech. I declared I would have to turn back if he would not allow me to take my reserve supply of tinned milk for the baby, rice and sugar for the boy. With a sudden gesture he snatched away my hand-bag and flung it open. For the first time in my life I knew real physical terror. My pistol, wrapped in an old piece of brown paper, lay in the bag. As I watched him, the officer pulled out all the papers...and the pistol, holding it in its wrappings in his hand. Without any volition

on my part I went down on my knees in that filthy roadway and quite suddenly was praying...aloud...and, most strangely, in French, tears streaming down my face. He looked down at me in some surprise and suddenly snapped to attention as an enormous staff car pulled up with a tooting of its horn. It was coming from the unoccupied territory to the occupied. A staff officer descended, furious at his way being blocked by my car. With typical Prussian tactics he turned on his nearest subordinate. Anybody of lower rank must be to blame for any inconvenience. Harshly he ordered the Lieutenant to get my car out of the way. Then the Major for the first time looked at me still on my knees, and, as if in answer to my prayers, shouted at the Lieutenant, "What's the matter with you...can't you see she's only a mother...have you nothing better doing with your time?" His face beet-red from the thoroughly unmerited bawling out he was receiving, the Lieutenant slammed my belongings, including the still unwrapped pistol, back into my purse, thrust it into my hands, and harshly ordered me to "Get on with you".... I hastily gathered up my provisions and luggage. Believe, if you will, that my gratitude belongs to the German officer and his foul temper. But I know that what intervened was the hand of God.

I climbed back into the car and before I myself could realize it, I was in unoccupied territory and being subjected to the disappointed stare of my small son. Finally he spoke. "When we see Daddy I am going to tell him you were frightened. And I wasn't."

That night we reached Montaubon. I knew we could go no further. Pierre, perhaps unafraid but indisputably feverish, looked very ill. Little Diane was weak for food. And I was close to the breaking point, trembling uncontrollably. I pulled the car to a stop in front of the hotel and went in to try and get a room.

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The collapse of a nation is too vast, too incredible, to grasp at the moment it occurs. At the time it is important only in the way one is immediately affected. If the fall of France was symbolized to me in being denied medical aid when my little boy might be dying, it resolved itself in Philippe's mind into preventing the Germans from passing a small cross-roads in the outskirts of an unimportant village.

Immediately his leave was over he had rushed back to join his regiment on the Swiss border. It was anticipated that a German drive would be launched through Switzerland simultaneous with their invasion of the low countries. Three days later orders were issued to entrain for an unknown destination, and, on the 16th, the regiment found itself not more than twenty miles from our home, on its way up to the Belgian border.

This trip provided Philippe with his first experiences under enemy fire. The further north the train moved, the more enemy planes were in evidence and, though no bombs had yet been dropped near them, it was only a question of time before his men got a serious strafing. At the very rear of the train there were a few open cars on which some machine guns had been mounted for anti-aircraft work, but most of the train was unprotected. Philippe ordered his men to place their guns, fusils-mitrailleurs, on the roofs of the carriages and then stand ready. The work had barely been completed when a squadron of Nazi planes appeared overhead, wheeled, and, at about six thou-

sand feet, began unloading their bombs. The men opened fire and the planes were driven off. Not till it was all over, did Philippe pause to consider his own reactions. For months he had worried that he might become rattled, or even frightened under fire, and lose the confidence of his men. How that was over he found himself perfectly calm and was very pleased with himself. But not for long. It always seemed his fate cross some other officer. On this occasion the young lieutenant in charge of the machine guns was furious. If there was to be shooting, it was up to him to give the orders. The rule-book said so. Philippe agreed with him completely but, as the lieutenant had taken advantage of the train stopping to saunter over to a nearby bistro, he was not there to give any orders. Did he, perhaps, propose that the train should have been bombed out of existence?

Back in his own carriage, Philippe found Captain La Mailleraye holding his sides with laughter. The confusion people had been thrown into amused him vastly. One very handsome sub-altern, known throughout the regiment for his beautifully tailored uniforms, had hurled himself head first into a ditch without noting that it had been used by troop train as an improvised lavatory. He made a sorry picture as he dragged himself out. The Major had sought refuge under the engine and refused to come out until convinced that the planes were really gone. Even then, Philippe thought, it was only the danger of being burnt by cinders that forced him into the open.

As soon as the train reached its destination, the men began their march north toward the front, their progress badly impeded by the streams of refugees flowing south. It was Philippe's first contact with those lost souls with whom I was already so familiar. There was, he felt, a distant brightening in their attitude when they saw the Senegalese. Now that the colonials had come, things would go better. Up to now their experiences had all been with the ill fated ninth army of General Corap, who was completely disgraced and, later, to their everlasting discredit, reinstated by the men of Vichy.

The battalion finally arrived at Formerie where it was to dig in. The Germans were believed to be more than a hundred miles to the north and east. Philippe got his men billeted as comfortably as possible, set up his field kitchens, placed his guns, and retired to his own quarters for a sorely needed bath. He was revelling in the hot water when orders came to report immediately to the village square. The general in command of the sector wanted him. Yanking on his uniform, Philippe rushed to the appointed place where he found the general and La Mailleraye. The Germans, it appeared, were not a hundred miles away. They had already taken the town of Aumales, barely ten miles to the west. Philippe was to assemble his platoon and retake the town. As the officers discussed their plans, a group of British soldiers passed by, heading south. They were a bettered lot, most of them wounded, and had been in a serious scrap with the Boches. One of them rode in a wheel-barrow..legs completely shot off. Philippe questioned them and discovered

they came from the direction of Amiens where they had been set on quite unexpectedly by the Germans. They had had no idea the enemy was anywhere in the vicinity and had been butchered without any chance to fight back. The whole allied communications system had completely bogged down, through sabotage it was learned later.

Philippe was to have a detachment of forty men to re-capture the city. He faced the general. "I feel I should point out, sir", he said, "that Aumales is a considerable town, something over two thousand people, and, if the Germans are in occupation of all the houses, it will be quite impossible to displace them with such a small force". On learning this, apparently a complete surprise to him, the general increased the detachment by the addition of two 25mm. anti-tank guns with their crews.

Aumales offered a desolate spectacle when it was reached. Already severely bombed from the air, armored cars had raced through its streets, firing incendiaries into the buildings so that most of them were gutted. The Germans had entered it with a mobile unit, done their damage, and raced on for similar action elsewhere. Corpses of civilians lay rotting in the houses and in the streets. Refugees from other towns were streaming through the whole night, clogging the roads interminably. The only civilians who had not fled were a group of nuns, valiantly trying to nurse and care for the wounded. They had no medical aid whatever and they begged Philippe to find a doctor and a priest

to administer the last rites to the dying. No doctor was to be found but that afternoon the Tirailleurs did stop a car, driven by a peasant and carrying a priest. Philippe asked him to stop for an hour to assist the nuns, but he flatly refused. It was too dangerous here. It was more dangerous than he knew, for Philippe drew his revolver and announced that he would shoot without any hesitation unless the priest reconsidered.

The reluctant priest was marched up to the door of the building where the brave women were working. As he arrived, a group of them were burying the dead.

The common room, transformed into a ward, was hideous with the moans of the dying and the stench of their rotting wounds. More than eighty civilians, men, women and children, were here. One baby, not quite six months old, had a piece of shrapnel lodged in the back of his skull, pressing into the head so far that his little eye was half gouged out. The good sisters cleansed and dressed his wounds but there was no medical help to be had to save him. In Philippe's mind there was a picture of his own children as he saw the agony of this infant. In a corner lay a man, obviously entering his last agonies, so Philippe sent the priest to give him absolution first while he helped the nuns in trying to make the wounded more comfortable. Suddenly the priest stood up, his face dark with rage. "This is wasting my time", he shouted. "This man is Polish and can not even understand me. I will not confess a man I cannot understand". Philippe's pistol was in his hand again. And the

last rites were administered. Not till the cleric had rejoined the refugees and left the town did Philippe realize that his actions had been too incredible for a man of that cloth and that he had probably been a spy masquerading in priest's garb. German agents were constantly filtering through. The nuns held captive, for instance, a young girl, the marks of parachute straps clearly visible on her back.

By nightfall, Philippe had his men all billeted and some semblance of order restored to the stricken town. To his amazement, he found that the telephone lines were in good order and could not resist calling our home, such a few miles away. He talked to Me-me and learned that the babies and I were already part of that stream of flotsam flowing through the roads of France. This worried him dreadfully. His own eyes had seen the havoc wrought among the refugees.

Toward dawn exhaustion overcame him. He had not had a decent sleep since his return to Switzerland and had now been working forty-eight hours without a moment's respite. Leaving strict orders he was to be disturbed for no reason other than an attack by the enemy or a visit from the general, he threw himself down on his pallet to try to get an hour's sleep. After ten minutes he was roused by his sergeant, Marakura, kicking firmly at the soles of his boots in a determined attempt to rouse him. He struggled sleepily to his feet. What is it, the general or the Germans? Marakura shook his head. "No, sir, only the Tirailleurs". "Damn the Tirailleurs", shouted Philippe. "What

"do they want?" Marakurs drew himself up to his full height. "They wanted you to know you need not worry, Sir. We have learned that your home is only a few days march from here. That is only a few hours for the German tanks. We have talked it all over and I have been sent to tell you that we all know and love Madame and we will all die before one German can get through to harm her or the babies". How sincerely they meant this they were to prove only a few days later.

Orders came through to leave Aumales and move toward Amiens. This was taken to mean that the troops were to dig in on the south bank of the Somme and stop the Germans there. But busses from Paris mysteriously appeared and, instead of making the Somme as impregnable as possible, the troops were rushed off toward Compiegne, where they dawdled about for a week, doing nothing. The same busses took them back to Conti and, after a frightfully long march, Arraines, a little village a few miles south of Abbeville, was reached. While the Senegalese cannot carry anything on their shoulders without great discomfort but can carry tremendous loads on their heads or on the small of their backs, the major insisted on them making the long march with regulation knapsacks, so that the men arrived in a state of complete exhaustion. Marakura, tears in his eyes, said to Philippe, "The Major he do not like us. He has sold us to the Germans. Our men are now tired and will not be able to fight today". That was one June 3rd. I was en my way back to Normandie from Chateaublanc, seeing Paris under its air raid.

Arraines, occupied by the battalion just before midnight, is a town of more than three thousand, nestling on a small elevation and sloping down to a stream. On the other side of the stream, and nearly all around the town, is higher ground. When dawn broke on the morning of the 4th, it was discovered that this high ground was already in possession of the Germans. Philippe and his men were completely surrounded, cut off from the rest of the regiment. Their only hope was to hold the village until reinforcements could break through the lines that surrounded it. During the week that the Colonials had been dawdling in Compiegne, the Germans had seriously infiltrated south of the Somme, though their major attack was not to begin until the following day.

Philippe's platoon was responsible for a crossroads. Obstructions were set up, his guns put into place to command the approaches, his men stationed at strategic points. Then the long hours of waiting, broken only by constant firing from German sharpshooters, well out of sight in the hills above. On the 5th, an occasional shell began dropping with shrapnel bursting around the men. By noon, La Maillyaye brought bad news. They were completely cut off. The colonel was entrapped at Quesney, some miles to the northeast. Even the radio would no longer work. The little food and ammunition now in their possession had to last. There would be no more. Just at dusk there was the sound of motors racing up to the barricade. It was too dark to see clearly, so Philippe went up to investigate. Fifty

70.

yards from the barricade he challenged, "Qui va là?" The reply was a burst of machine gun fire. Philippe hurled himself behind the protection of the barricade, now being raked with machine gun fire. Beyond it he could see three German soldiers, their motorcycles lying on the road beside them, huddled around a machine gun. He emptied his revolver at them and they climbed back on to their motorcycles and roared away. Through the entire night they fought off German patrols and, at dawn, began being shelled in earnest. Artillery had obviously been brought up by the Germans and an attack could be expected at any moment. With what little ammunition they had left, their positions could not be held for more than a few minutes in the face of an onslaught. This was their third day of being surrounded.

That morning the major called Philippe's platoon back to join the troops in the village itself. For the next hours, the Senegalese sniped away from windows whenever they saw a German and the Germans lobbed shells into the buildings at frequent intervals. The casualties were beginning to mount appallingly.

A little stream ran through the village, with a tiny bridge running over it. Mines had been planted all around it. Toward noon a car came speeding up to it, its occupants shouting "Kamerad" and, simultaneously, shooting a burst from their tommy guns. As the car hit the bridge, the mines exploded. The car went high in the air, turned over and came down. Two of its occupants were thrown clear and captured, maps they possessed showing that the Germans had already advanced more than

fifty miles beyond our own village. The other two were pinned down, with the car across their legs, and lay there in the hot sun, moaning throughout the entire day. Twice Philippe attempted to get to the men and drag them loose, but, in both cases, was fired on and driven off. He found that he could be curiously impersonal in the presence of death but he was never able to control a feeling of horror at the sight of human suffering.

From this time on the sky was full of Stukas, their dread noise mingling with the burst of shrapnel. But there was never any sign of British or French planes. At last the pounding ceased and the slopes leading to the village, about a mile away, were seen to be thick with infantry, advancing for the kill. The village, by now, was a roaring inferno, buildings collapsing right and left as the flames weakened them. Philippe, with a detachment, was at the very edge of the village, protected by a still standing wall. Suddenly it collapsed above them. In one bound he and his men gained the river bank, their only chance to avoid being burned to death. Then they sought refuge in the tall devil grass growing there.

At seven that night a German tank rolled over the little bridge, crushing the overturned car lying in its path, and stilling the cries of the wounded Germans. Infantrymen came fast behind. From the village their voices could be heard, punctuated by an occasional burst of fire from a tommy gun as they found some wounded

Senegalese. Then through the tall grass came crawling old Massoul, the company sergeant major. He reached Philippe and saluted gravely. "The battalion, Sir," he said, "she is God damned finish." Philippe gave orders to his men to cease firing and save the little ammunition they still had. At quarter of eight he called on the survivors to follow him, slipped into the stream, and made for the other shore. There they joined together again. There was Philippe, Marakura, the faithful Mama Bakura, sergeant Massoul, sergeant Camboulives and Louis. Six men left out of more than fifty. Louis was the company barber and dragged Camboulives along with him, even though he had been badly wounded in the back and, even worse, in the left foot so that it was very difficult for him to walk.

The little band lay for what seemed hours in a ditch on the far side of the river, while the Germans combed it with long poles, searching for any stragglers. Philippe braced himself, cocked pistol in his hand, waiting to be discovered. But the Germans must have decided they were wasting their time for they abandoned the search within a few yards of Philippe and his men.

Slowly, tortuously, they crawled around to the southwest of the burning village, German sentries always in evidence. By midnight they reached a plateau overlooking Dreuil and saw that village too was in flames. In fact, if the reflections in the sky meant anything, the whole countryside was ablaze.

The first road they had to cross lost Massoul to them. Challenged by a sentry, he lost his head and ran along the chalky

road, making a perfect target for the German. The others took to the fields. Bullets whined about them but none of them was hit. About two in the morning they beat their way into a small wood right in the center of the fields, and collapsed, exhausted.

The next morning, June 7th, Philippe awoke a little before dawn, stiff and sore from lying on the cold earth in the forest. Forcing himself forward, he dragged himself to the edge of the woods to look out into the field. If he and his comrades were to have any hopes of rejoining the French army, presumed to be preparing for a stand at the Seine, the utmost caution was essential. It was not yet daylight, and there seemed to be no Germans in sight. With difficulty he roused the others; Camboulives with his bad foot, Louis, and the two Senegalese, Manna Bakura and his own sergeant, Marakura. Philippe, with his years of hunting experience, knew that their greatest safety lay in sticking to the woods. Through the half-light, the five pushed on, finally reaching another area of trees a mile or two further south. And just in time. They had barely gained this sanctuary, when fifty small German tanks roared up, raking the fields surrounding it with machine gun fire to drive out anyone hiding there.

Philippe called a counsel of war. "There is no sound of fighting so the enemy must be at least thirty miles ahead. Otherwise there would be the roar of artillery. The English are somewhere on the right, with quite a large base at Dieppe. It might be possible to reach there, get disembarked, and re-

sume fighting with them. On the other hand, the French must be on the Seine." It was decided to try to get through to the French, particularly as they were now in Normandie and Philippe was familiar with the land and the roads.

Pushing on through a wooded lane, they ran smack into a party of Germans, not more than twenty yards away. But the Boches were busy eating and resting and the fugitives were able to gain the woods again without detection. All day they pushed on, their stomachs aching and their throats parched for lack of food or water. In the afternoon they came upon a beautifully camouflaged Nazi plane, concealed under some trees. Here, in truth, was escape for them. Except for the one unfortunate fact that none of them knew how to operate it.

That night they did not stop to rest but dragged themselves on, southward and ever southward, taking advantage of the shield of darkness to press forward. But the darkness had disadvantages as well as advantages. About three in the morning Philippe and Mama Bakura, leading the little band, got entangled in the lines of field telephone and were promptly challenged by a German sentry. All five of them threw themselves to the ground as shots flew overhead. Then, from not over a hundred yards away, came voices. Officers had been attracted by the German's fire. Mama Bakura crawled to my husband's side.

"Lieutenant, it is not good here," he said. "We ought to get into that wood over there."

Philippe pointed out that unfortunately the Germans were between them and the woods. But Mama Bakura was still unhappy.

"We will be killed like chickens if they find us here. It is not good."

"Exactly why they must not find us," Philippe replied. "If we don't make a sound they may never do so."

"But if they do?"

"Then we will each toss a grenade at them and jump into the middle of it and hope to fight our way out. But the chances are certainly very slight."

Mama Bakura shook his head sadly. "You have been a damned good lieutenant," he said, "but pretty soon I think you be a dead lieutenant." With which cheerful remark he crawled off through the tall grass.

Silence followed, broken only by the noise of the Germans pushing through the tall grain, searching. They must have decided their sentry was just jump for, ultimately, they abandoned the search, and were heard no more. Half an hour later there was a single shot, from nearby, followed by the sharp ping of a bullet on a helmet. Philippe crawled to Marakura's side and asked if any of the band had raised their heads and been seen. The sergeant knew nothing. There was no more excitement and Philippe ventured to pluck a few ears of the corn from the stalks, chewing on them to get some food and liquid. Exhaustion overcame him and he fell asleep, not waking till nearly noon. The sun was high in the Heavens and the Germans were exactly

where they had been when he dozed off. Toward evening they packed up and left for some new position and, for the first time, Philippe dared to raise his head. Hastily his little band gathered together. One...two...three...four....where was Mama Bakura? A few yards away they found him, lying on his back, his dead body dreadfully swollen from a full day's exposure to the hot sun. He had unbuckled his belt, stacked his ammunition beside him, and shot himself through the mouth. His fingers were still clamped tight about his pistol in rigor mortis. There were tears in Philippe's eyes as he remembered Mama's promise to me. "Thou must not fear, Mistress. No harm will come to thy husband while I live." He must have decided that Philippe's position was now hopeless and had fulfilled his vow.

Now only four, the little detachment pushed on, and, twenty-four hours later, found their first water lying in the middle of a pasture. It was only about an inch of rotten leaves and brackish moisture, but they lapped it up like animals, grateful for anything moist to slack their devouring thirst.

On the afternoon of the tenth they were on the outskirts of Fougarmon and found themselves looking down into a valley through which an artillery column was passing. Once it had gone, they rushed down into the valley, for here would be water and, perhaps, food. In spite of their haste, Philippe, bringing up the rear, turned back to make sure that they were

not followed and, to his horror, saw a man, about five hundred yards away, pursuing and yelling to them to stop. Philippe told the others to push on and threw himself into a ditch. But he was not alone. Despite Philippe's orders, Marakura was beside him. They both lay there, their rifles pointed up the road. A few moments later their pursuer appeared around a bend, frantically searching for them. He wore an improvised bandage about his head and the by now thoroughly unrecognizable uniform of a Chasseur Alpin. He too was in flight and had seen Philippe's little band. The presence of Marakura removed any doubts in his mind as to their nationality. The Germans would never have a black man with them. He joined the quartet, and they pushed on, that afternoon finding their first food in four days in the form of a dozen eggs and some sour cream. On opening the eggs the men turned away. The odor was frightful. But they braced themselves. The Chinese ate eggs hundreds of years old. Who were they to turn up their noses at these, only a few weeks over due. Louis, holding his nose, bravely fried them in one of the plates of an old fashioned pair of scales found in a deserted farm house. Thus revived, they pushed on.

In the next two days they made their way across three sizable streams, somehow by-passed the long German columns moving up to Montreuil, and, on the 12th of June, found themselves within a few kilometres of Philippe's own property. For the first time, Philippe ventured to expose himself. He

went through the yard of a farmhouse, his men safely hidden in the woods behind him, and caught the attention of the farmer's wife. When she saw the French uniform, she was terrified. What if the Germans came..they would all be shot. But she put her fears behind her and gathered up all the food stuffs that she had. With them in his pockets, Philippe returned to the woods. Eagerly, the men crammed the food into their mouths and drank the sweet cider. Then, at least partly refreshed, began the trip through the woods to Aigrement, Philippe's own home. It was long after dusk when they came to the other side of the woods and Philippe left his men to crawl toward the house in the friendly shadow of the three hundred year old linden trees. German soldiers lolled outside the keeper's ledge. Finally, he dared go no further and settled down to wait. After an hour or so he saw a figure going from the house to the stables. It was a woman, so not a German. Taking a desperate chance, he whistled softly. As calmly as though she were just taking a stroll, the woman, apparently paying no attention to the whistle, turned and sauntered toward him. As she got nearer, even in the gathering darkness, Philippe was able to recognize Mme. Maiticsse Hocquard waddling toward him. In whispers she told him she would send his mother and he withdrew

to join his companions in the woods.

That night Mé-mé found him. What a shock that first glimpse of her handsome and immaculate son must have been. More than a week had passed since he had been able to shave, his uniform had been torn to tatters by half the barbed wire in Picardy and Normandie, leaves were stuck in his helmet for camouflage, and across one cheek ran a jagged scar, caked with blood, where a bullet had grazed him. From her he learned of the German occupation of the Chateau and his hopes of the meal and bottle of champagne he had been dreaming of were dashed. The wine cellar was no more. The poultry had all been slaughtered. The potatoes had all been dug up and shipped back to Germany, none left for the next year's planting. In fact, there was little food of any kind to be had except for the rabbits which could be snared in the woods.

Fortunately, Mé-mé had been granted special permission to go out at night. This was so she could aid the farmer's wives in rounding up the scattered and panicked cattle, lost in the woods. The commandateur was sleeping in our beautiful blue and French grey bedroom, an armed guard always at the door, so it was impossible for her to enter it to find Philippe fresh clothes. She did, however, manage to get into the linen closet. All the household linens had vanished into German homes but, in an old trunk, she found some things and, covering them with a torn sheet, hid them under her apron. Looking like a very expectant mother, she came to Philippe in the woods and proudly presented him with a razor, a pair of old flannel trousers, and a pair of riding breeches belonging to me. The flannel trousers were given to Marakura to keep him warm, and Philippe kept the breeches for himself. Although much too tight and buttoning in all the wrong places, they were a great improvement over the tattered rags he had been wearing.

By the next day word had run from farm to farm that "Monsieur was home", and the farmers dug from their cellars long buried treasures; a bottle of wine here, an old cheese there, a choice piece of meat from the other place.

By the night of the 14th Camboulives felt that his feet was sufficiently well for the journey to be resumed. Philippe said farewell to his mother. She, poor woman, never believed that he would find the French army. But he assured her they would make a stand on the Loire and would soon drive the Germans

back again. Had the Germans not occupied the Chateau once before, in 1870, and had they not been driven out? So would it be this time. With a last long embrace, he turned from her, and the pilgrimage south began again.

If I thought I had gone through any ordeal on my seven hour journey across the seventeen miles to the Seine, I knew nothing. It took Philippe three days to cover the same distance. At one A.M. on the morning of the 17th, he and his little band arrived at a tiny village, west of Rouen, where he knew a ferry plied across the river. The little ticket office on the river bank appeared empty but he did not dare investigate. It was far too likely to be filled with sleeping Germans. Instead they sought sanctuary in a thicket some fifty yards away on the river bank. Approaching it, they heard an ominous rustling from within. Drawing his pistol and motioning his companions to stand where they were, Philippe pushed his way into the brush, coming on five Chasseurs Alpins. They had with them one sergeant who explained they had been cut to ribbons at Tôtes and had got this far, trying to cross the river. The task seemed hopeless as the Germans occupied the ticket house, examining everyone the ferryman rowed across. The Chasseurs had no arms of any kind.

Philippe's band joined them in their hiding place and settled down to spend the night. The river is something over three hundred yards wide at this point, and Philippe felt they

might all well have come to the end of their journey. The sergeant of the Chasseurs came to Philippe. "I hear that some of your party can swim and I think they should try to get across the river and find a boat on the south side." Philippe nodded. He had thought of that, too. But, so far as he knew, he was the only one of the group who could swim. And in his mind there was one fixed determination. If he got through to safety, Marakura was going to get through with him. If the whites were captured they would become prisoners. But if the negro fell into German hands, it meant death. He also knew that, even if he found the ferryman, he couldn't row the big boat across the river single-handed. Finally he reached a decision. If anyone would volunteer to go with him, he would attempt the three hundred yard swim against the treacherous current. When the question was put to the men, Marakura leapt to his feet. "I am a good swimmer complete. I have certificate showing me good swimmer. I go with lieutenant." So it was decided and the two men, one black, one white, stripped and dived into the river. But only after Marakura was assured there were no crocodiles in the Seine. They were as silent as possible but attracted the attention of a sentry at the ticket office, who fired on them. The moonlight was not bright enough to afford him good vision and no harm came to the swimmers who, in spite of their best efforts, were carried nearly a mile down stream by the swirling currents before they were able to make headway across the stream.

About half-way over, Philippe suddenly heard a quiet voice from the water beside him. "Lieutenant, I am not so good swimmer as I thought, so goodbye, lieutenant." He turned swiftly to see the uncomplaining Marakura disappear beneath the water. Somehow Philippe managed to tow the exhausted negro across and they dragged themselves, gasping and spent, up the bank on the opposite shore. By now it was about three in the morning and Marakura was shivering horribly from the cold. They tried to find a boat but in the dark it was hopeless unless they actually stumbled on it. Philippe did find a haystack in a nearby field. He opened it up, thrust Marakura into it, and piled the hay over him so he would at least keep warm. Then Philippe piled in after him.

At dawn he was awakened by the sound of footsteps. This was his lowest moment. Here was he, unarmed, and stark naked in the middle of a field. The moment those haystacks were touched, he was doomed. There was nothing for it but to brazen it out. He kicked Marakura with all his might, waking him with a sudden start, and, at the same moment, leapt forth. An old farmer, his wheelbarrow in front of him, recoiled in alarm at sight of those two devilish figures, both equally naked and both equally black, for Philippe was thickly coated with oil from his swim across the dirty Seine, now covered with oil from refineries destroyed by the British. From the farmer they obtained a pair of sheets in which to drape themselves, and, dressed in his improvised toga, Philippe sallied forth to find the ferryman.

After hours of argument with that worthy, he finally won him over, but the trip could not be undertaken in daylight. So all that day Philippe and Marakura hid on one bank of the river while their fellows hid on the other. At midnight, the ferryman poled his ferry a mile or so down river and crossed over, rescuing the others.

For the next ten days they fought their weary way southwards, through Brittany toward the Loire and Bordeaux. One help they had, and that was the wonderful support of the farmers. Everywhere they were full of bitterness against "Les Boches" and anxious to help anyone who wanted to carry on the fight against them. At one village, a young girl gave Philippe a newspaper edited by the Germans, "Bernieres Nouvelles De Paris." In it he was confronted by pictures of the enemy marching through the Arc de Triomphe in Paris and eulogies of those "fearless knights," Weygand and Laval.

On the night of the 28th they came into the pays d'Ouche and sought shelter at a large farm. The owner was the mayor of the village and he met my husband in surprise. "Lieutenant, do you not know there has been an armistice since the 25th?" Philippe brushed this aside. He was tired of gossip about armistices. What he wanted was the whereabouts of the French army so he could join it, and that was all. "But it is true," his host insisted. "In my barn I have my own electrical plant so my radio still works. Come and hear for yourself." Into that dim interior, fragrant with the smell of hay, marched Philippe and his men and to their

astonished ears came the voice of their commander-in-chief, the old marshall, Petain, telling he had signed an armistice. They stared at each other in blank horror. Cambeulives swore lustily that when he got home he would organize a troop of francs tireurs. Marakura could not understand what had happened to all the Senegalese that the Germans had won. The Chasseurs Alpins just stood there, silent tears coursing down their bearded cheeks, as they mourned for their mother, France. Silently they all turned to leave. As they went out into the night, suddenly, in the doorway, they stopped. Another voice was coming over the radio. A voice filled with hope, with courage. A voice telling them that France would continue the fight. Their shoulders straightened and their eyes lit up as they turned back to listen to the voice of Charles de Gaulle.

The problem of Marakura was becoming more and more acute. Each day brought them nearer to the border between occupied and unoccupied France and, consequently, into bigger and bigger German concentrations. It was hopeless even to think of smuggling him over the line. Some refuge must be found for him. One night, travelling through the woods, they came upon an old monastery, buried deep in the forest. Philippe boldly rang at the gate and was greeted by an old monk, to whom Philippe frankly explained the whole predicament. Wonder of wonders, his host was fully able to understand it, as he had served as a Colonial officer in the last war. He was an Alsatian

and knew the Germans well. He told Philippe there would not be an egg or a potato left in the whole countryside. Only starvation lay ahead. Poor France had forsaken her religion and this retribution that had come upon her was the result. He begged Philippe to recognize Hitler as the anti-Christ and to continue the fight against him for, he said, "Only in continuing the struggle, can France redeem her sins and the Holy Mother will save her once again." Philippe was never to forget the words of this valiant monk.

Of Marakura, he said, "The son of God asks not the color of man but only that he shall be worthy. Leave your friend with me. He will be safe. I will hide him if need be beneath the altar." To Marakura, who was a devout Moslem, Philippe explained that the priest was a Captain of the Marsouins...the native word for the Colonials...and also a "Marabout," a high priest. And so the two friends parted, the negro bitterly tearful that he could not follow his lieutenant to the end of the road. Philippe's solace came nearly a year later when word was smuggled to his mother, through one of the farmers, that "her son's friend was safe and well." One day when we go back we expect to find Marakura, happily tending the monastery garden, a devout Catholic.

There still lay ahead the most difficult task, getting across the boundary into what was still, nominally, France. As Philippe approached it, the concentration of Germans became thicker and thicker. On the morning of July 1st Amboise was reached. The Loire runs through the town, dividing it. The

little party stopped for lunch at a tiny cafe on the banks of the river, from which they were able to observe that the black uniformed special police had already arrived and were examining everyone crossing the ferries. By now the party had decreased to four and it was agreed they should split into two groups. The first pair would try the ferry first and, if they got by all right, would wave to the other pair, who could follow and the quartet would meet again at a predetermined place on the south side of the river. Philippe and the Chasseur were to go first, Camboulives and Louis would follow. The ferry was crossed and, while the guards examined the other passengers, Philippe and his companion managed to slip by unobserved. They waved encouragement to the others and went straight to the rendezvous, where they waited three hours past the appointed time. But Camboulives and Louis didn't appear. Philippe was never able to find out what happened to them.

On the north side of Amboise there was an enormous prison camp filled with captured soldiers. About ten acres had been roped off with barbed wire and, within this barricade, the prisoners were herded. Armed guards patrolled it at frequent intervals to prevent escape. There were no buildings of any kind within the area and the men, most of them in rags, had no protection of any sort against the elements. They simply stood there, like cattle, in the rain or scorching sun, lying down to sleep on the bare ground without any covering when

exhaustion overcame them. Each day large lorries would appear and haul off those who had died during the past twenty-four hours and the rest would be left, to pray that the following day they might be cargo for the trucks.

That night Philippe and his companion reached the river Char, the boundary line. The bridge was patrolled by sentries, so they scouted along the river bank until they found some boats, padlocked to stakes driven in the bank. The Chasseur picked the lock on one and at two in the morning they set off, paddling the water with their bare hands to propel the boat. On the morning of July 2nd they were in unoccupied France.

That night they reached Chateaublanc, where Philippe expected to find me. Instead, the house in which I had been a guest, was empty, its bare outlines ghostly in the moonlight. Where I had gone or where I now was, no one in the village knew. His mind still vivid with the sight of the fleeing refugees he had seen and the carnage that had occurred among them, his heart failed him. There was little chance his wife and children had survived under circumstances in which he had seen so many others perish. He had only one hope. If I were still alive, I would certainly have notified some friend in the government, by now removed to Vichy. He would go there, get demobilized, and try to find some trace of me.

That peaceful little town was a mad-house when he arrived, impossibly crowded, excited by its first view of the German troops

which had been withdrawn to Moulins after the armistice, and full of the debris of the temporary regime. There was not a room to be found anywhere. The National Assembly was just starting its meetings, so Philippe hung about the entrance of the Petit Casino, waiting for the exit of the deputies so he could button-hole those whom he knew and get any information to be had. It was during this period that the assembly handed over its powers to Petain. Philippe managed to attend that meeting and heard how the ubiquitous Laval tricked that body into its decision. With fiendish insistence, he pointed out to the elected representatives of France, that, dislike his policies as they might, the fact remained he represented the last vestige of civilian power. If the assembly repudiated him, Weygand would take over with his military clique and had they not already proved their complete incompetence, turning a defeat into a shameful rout? On the other hand, Laval pointed out, there stood the old Marshall, Petain. Delegate the powers to him and he, Laval, would control him. Didn't everyone know Petain, the hero of Verdun, the grand old man of France, was in his dotage? As the lesser of the two evils, Petain was chosen and Laval and his sycophant, Darlan, moved in with the results that have been so apparent. Only one element did they fail to consider. In Petain there was still left some vestige of the man who had defended Verdun, some affection for the spirit that had been France. And that spirit led him to defy Laval as the puppeteer that pulls the strings.

It was while in Vichy that Philippe heard, from Weygand's own lips, the words, "It is now July 6th. I give you my word that within six weeks, Hitler will be in London. It is all over and we must make the best terms we can with Hitler."

Philippe was frantic. He knew, if this came about, my position as an Englishwoman would be desperate. He must find me if I were still alive. Busy being demobilized, decorated with the Croix de Guerre almost without being conscious of this last tribute of his fallen country, he went from ministry to ministry, questioning, questioning. Finally he heard that there were a number of English at Montaubon. Perhaps his wife was among them.

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The sun had already set when I reached Montaubon. I had hoped to finish the journey that day. But to go further was impossible. Pierre, perhaps unafraid, but indisputably feverish, looked very ill. Little Diane was weak for feed. And I was close to the breaking point, trembling uncontrollably. I pulled the car to a stop in front of the hotel and went in to try and get a room.

As I crossed the lobby, I saw three men standing in the corner, talking. There was something familiar in the shape of the back of one of their heads. A cry burst from me.

"Philippe!"

My husband turned in time to catch me in his arms.

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No woman can see her husband go to war without dreading the changes she will find in him when he returns hardened by the suffering and brutality of conflict. I was no exception and these fears were very conscious ones, but, once reunited with Philippe, how quickly they left me. Privation and suffering can make people much dearer to one another, even those who already loved devotedly as Philippe and I did, but now there was an added tenderness to be found, a new wonderment in the simple miracle of being together. We lived in squalor such as we had never dreamed of, one filthy little room in an nth. class hotel, overrun with lice, almost unbearable with heat. The two children shared the same room with us, their underclothes and the baby's diapers washed in the dirty little sink and drying on a rope across the room providing the never changing decor. And yet we were happy. But it was a desperate happiness because every tomorrow might mean separation. Added to this, the frightful heat was tearing the children down mercilessly and there was little or no food to be had for them, let alone for us. After three weeks we managed to get our papers as refugees from Normandy with permits for a tiny quantity of petrol and started north again for Chateaublanc. There, safely hidden at my friend's house, was rice and sugar, and nearby was a farm with milk so at least the children could be nourished.

I have forgotten how many days it took us to make that trip. By night we slept in ditches, hideous with the stench of human excrement. By day we fought our way forward, inch by

inch, through the never ending streams of traffic, suddenly to be stopped motionless, to wait for hours in the broiling sun. That meant that somewhere, miles and miles away, the Germans had ordered a line of traffic stopped and the French authorities, anxious not to incur the displeasure of their conquerors, stopped everything within reach. At Limoges orders were issued that no cars could move to the north. Finally, a young Lieutenant agreed to turn his head if we passed his station at exactly the right moment. Ultimately we got back to Chateaublanc. And there we found Jock:

One morning Philippe bicycled in to the village to buy some tobacco. In the little store he discovered an enormous man, dressed in unidentifiable parts of every known uniform, standing before the counter while the ancient crone who ran the place denounced him at the top of her voice as the betrayer of France. Everything that had happened was the fault of the English and soon they would pay. The Germans would be in London and then the English should see how they liked this war. And to Philippe's astonished ears came the succinct reply, "not bleddy likely, they won't." My husband spirited Jock out of the place and discovered that he belonged to the Northumberland Fusiliers, had been captured near Rouen, and had escaped three times, eventually getting across into the Free Zone. Not far away a comrade of his, Jimmy, as slight as Jock was brawny, was hidden, and Philippe arrived back at the house with these two human scarecrows. I can not remember if it was Jock

who adopted my babies or the babies who adopted Jock. The result was the same. They were inseparable.

After a few weeks it became obvious that England was not to fall, just yet at any rate. Philippe was at the lowest ebb of despair. He knew that continental France could never resume the struggle but he was far from ready to give up. Also there was the additional problem of my nationality to contend with. The British were already very unpopular in France and things looked even more threatening. We decided we would try to get to Canada. There the children would be safe. And Philippe could join up with the British and carry on the fight. Jock and his pal were given money to help them on their way to Marseilles, from which they felt sure they could escape, and Philippe and I set off for Vichy to try and get the so essential "permits de sorties" without which no one could leave the country. For two weeks we plodded our weary way from ministry to ministry, turned away from each, until eventually Philippe ran into a friend of his who had been appointed secretary to one of the important ministries. Charles just laughed at Philippe's hopes of being able to leave but did promise to obtain the necessary permits for me and the children and advised us to go to Marseilles and wait for them. There we would find consulates of every country and could get visas for Spain and Portugal as well as Canada, all of which must be in one's possession before

one could leave France. So back we went to Chateaublanc, gathered up the children and a young girl we had enlisted to help us with them, and took the train southwards. The car had to be abandoned...no petrol at all could be obtained. And on the thirtieth day of September, 1940, we reached the Mediterranean.



In the little cottage I occupy on the shores of the Pacific, the late afternoon sun streams through the open windows. It is only April...two years from that April long ago when we bought the boots with the golden spurs in Paris...but the sun's rays are right with warmth and my two children, their bodies tanned and strong, play happily in the tiny garden. How different a picture from that dismal room in that dismal fifth rate hotel in Marseilles into which there came just one fugitive ray of sunshine each day at noon, only to be gone in exactly two minutes. I would stand, holding Diane up to catch what little warmth there might be in it, knowing in my heart that I was fighting a losing battle and that no infant could survive this cold and dampness.

We arrived in Marseilles at night and found lodgings in the only hotel we could get into; my husband and I, the two children, and the little girl who had come with us, all sharing the same room. The first night I stayed with the children while Philippe and Jeannine went out for dinner. An hour later the girl came back alone. To my frantic pleas to tell me what had happened to my husband she turned a deaf ear. My mind was filled with visions of him being arrested or Heaven alone knows what and I was nearly frantic with worry. Finally she slowly broke down and told me the truth. "I could not bear to tell you Madame, but as soon as we had finished dinner Monsieur asked the garcon where was the nearest brothel." At this startling revelation I could not help wishing that Philippe

had been arrested. Certainly that would have been preferable to this. A fine thing, to leave his wife and children while he went merry making...and in a brothel, no less. Long after midnight my errant husband came home, wan and tired, to face the angriest and most humiliated wife he had ever seen. When he managed to discover, through my incoherent outburst, what had upset me so, I was convinced he had lost his mind. He lay on the floor, helpless with laughter, the tears rolling down his cheeks. When he regained control he told me what he had done. As he sat at dinner he suddenly remembered his service with the "Joyeux" and of the familiarity with which they had spoken of brothels and their inmates. In his desperate mind a wild plan was conceived. Was not Marseilles the home of the smuggler? And would not the brothel keepers be a contact with them? And, was it not possible that among the underworld of this lawless city there might be some members of his own regiment? And, wonders of wonders, the idea was practical. Already he had established contacts with some of the criminal element and had met a girl in one of the brothels who was the sweetheart of a Captain of a Spanish ship and paid frequent visits to Marseilles. There was definite hope that we might escape from France, in his opinion the only way we could leave as he had no faith in ever receiving the promised papers.

Marseilles is like no other city. Most famed to the tourist for its "bouillabaisso" it is, in its psychology, still completely eighteenth centry. Its crooks are brigands and smugglers, ready to slit a throat at a moment's notice, recog-

Europe is such a haven for the footpad and the robber. These were our friends, their warmheartedness and generosity our only stay against starvation and want. My jewels and what money we had left was too precious to spend on food...this had to be saved to pay for the actual escape. A point of view our new friends thoroughly understood.

One morning Philippe ran into Jimmy, Jock's friend. He had been captured and was interned with other British prisoners at Fort St. Jean. The men were allowed out during the daytime but had to be back at the fort by sunset. Jock had escaped but two days later he re-appeared in the custody of the waterfront police. He and some comrades had stolen a row boat and started rowing for Gibralter but, overcome with sea sickness, they had been forced to give up. I think the ignominy was harder for Jock to bear than the disappointment of failure. In any eventuality, he was brought back into our very grateful lives.

By this time the first of our plans to escape was maturing. Contact had been established with the captain of a Spanish boat who agreed, for a sum, to sail with us toward the African coast. It sounded a perfectly wonderful scheme to us but Lucille, one of the girls from the brothels, looked at it with a critical eye. She couldn't tell why but there was something about the appearance of that captain that discouraged her. "He has upon him the look of death, that man." Ultimately, her Cassandra-like attitude affected me. I determined on one last stab to get out of the country legally and, against Philippe's strenuous objections, went back to Vichy. I arrived

there the day Dakar was attacked, automatically assuring any English citizen of an enthusiastic welcome. Not discouraged by this I began my ceaseless trudge from ministry to ministry. In one of them a very eager young assistant to an assistant, full of importance at his new position, demanded all my papers, and, of course, discovered that my "carte d'identite" was out of date. "Seless to explain that I could hardly return to Normandie to get it now renewed...that the Germans were rather much in evidence there. That was beside the point. I did not have the right papers. Therefore, it was a case for the police. A gendarme appeared and, while I fumed and fussed, discovered my forgotten pistol in my capacious handbag. Now I was in the jug. Literally. Wet and miserable I stared with a jaundiced eye at my adopted country through the crossed bars of the Vichy jail, my only comfort the kindness of a guard who took pity on me and gave me some newspapers to stuff in my wet shoes. A little after midnight I was released...without my precious pistol. Somehow, Charles, Philippe's friend at the ministry, had heard of my plight and vouched for my character. I got back to the hotel in time to get a phone call from a reproachful husband. I must return at once. The boat was ready to sail and the lives of fifteen people were in danger waiting for me. Tearfully, I promised to return as soon as I could and, bright and early the next morning, again presented myself at one of the ministries. As I waited to get in I was suddenly hailed by an old friend whom I had known in happier days in Paris. He

and his wife were staying at the ultra-smart Hotel Parque and I must lunch with them. Nothing could have given me greater pleasure than the thought of a good meal and I accepted delightedly and promptly at noon was in the lobby. While I waited for my hosts, three high ranking officers, resplendent in their gold braid, passed in front of me, and as they went by, I heard one say to the others, "do not disturb yourselves, my dear colleagues. There is no cause for alarm. We will give Hitler the Jews. They will satisfy him." Hungry as I was, I suddenly had no appetite. Their cold callousness was so unutterably horrible, I was sickened. They might have been speaking of potatoes instead of their fellow men.

During the lunch, my friends were enchanted with romantic undertones of my stay in Marseilles. How thrilling to associate with smugglers and brigands! How romantic to actually know those cocottes! It never occurred to them that my life and those of my children depended on those people. But the luncheon served its purpose. During it, I mentioned casually that I had written some letters to a firm in Canada with which Daddy had been associated, in the hopes that it might be of some help. Another guest instantly said that the representative of that firm in France had been newly appointed to one of the ministries and was then in Vichy. I left the luncheon table and headed like a rabbit for his office. It was nearly four o'clock when I got in and introduced myself. M. Le Ministre nearly fainted. He knew my father well and had frequently

stayed at my brother's house in London. Of a surety, something must be done! He rushed with me, from office to office, pleading my case, until finally we could go no further. It was five thirty and if I was to catch the train for Marseilles, I could wait no longer. I decided better to face a concentration camp than Philippe's fury and left, my new found friend assuring me he would get the necessary papers and forward them to me. The train I got was the last to leave Vichy for days. The Germans were reorganizing the railroads. But I arrived in Marseilles to find the boat had already sailed. The next day it struck a floating mine and all were lost. Lucille had been right. Upon the captain there had been "the look of death."

Soon plans were in the making for another attempt. This time the captain of a Greek ship was persuaded to take us out into the Mediterranean and either get us captured by a British ship or else disembark us at Gibraltar. As I write this, it sounds very simple but weeks had to be sent in making the arrangements. There were endless visits over endless aperitif in an endless procession of bistros, endless discussions, endless negotiations, before everything was finally settled. At midnight a motorboat was to pick us up at a designated wharf and take us out into the dark harbor where our ship would be waiting for us. We said good-bye to Jeannine, gave her all our belongings except what we were able to carry to the pier, and set off through the night. There were thirteen of us, Philippe and myself, the two children...the baby just a bundle wrapped in a shawl...two Belgian pilots, a Pole, two Frenchmen anxious to carry on the fight, three escaping Englishmen,

and, of course, Jock. Our guide led us through lumberyards, ghostly in the darkness of the night, and through deserted alleys to avoid the police. After what seemed miles, we arrived at the wharf, beneath which we hid ourselves on the damp rocks among the pilings. I was petrified that little Diane, who was then only 9 months old, would cry and betray our presence. Frantically, I fed her barley sugar, saved for just such an occasion, and covered her gleaming white shawl with an old mackintosh. Our ears were strained, listening for the sound of the boat that was to come for us, but, when it came, it glided to a stop silently, its motor muffled. Hastily, we tumbled into it. Just as we were about to start, little Pierre suddenly piped up. "Regarde, Papa," he said, "le police." His childish eyes had seen a police boat moving across the bay which none of us had noticed. We flung ourselves down into the wet bottom of the boat until danger had passed and then headed out into the harbor. Our ship was waiting for us, and in our own minds already escaped, we climbed aboard. On the deck the captain faced us. There had been a change of plans. Instead of heading straight for Gibralter he was going up the Rhone to Lyons for a cargo. Then he would return to Marseilles and resume the trip across the Mediterranean. For us, this amounted to suicide. We could not risk going back into the interior of France. The captain shrugged expressively. That was our problem. Our passages were paid for and also if we wished to forfeit the money he could not prevent us. As we all started protesting at once, the captain turned away. The

interview was over. But he turned back quickly as he felt Philippe's pistol in his ribs. My lawyer husband had learned tricks not in the law books. Dawn found us trudging back into Marseilles, our money in our pockets, but homeless. Our guide found one room for us over a little saloon and that room we were to occupy for the next six weeks with no heat and no hot water except on Saturdays and Sundays.

I can't remember how many wonderful plans for escape we made, all alike in only one respect. They ended in failure. Once we had a deal framed with the first mate of a ship to get us on board, and, as soon as we got under weigh, we were to mutiny and take over the vessel. This ended with the mate getting cold feet and abandoning the whole project.

Each plan involved the deepest conspiracies. Both French and German police were always around us and, often, we dared not even speak to each other. Each day Philippe and his friends chose a different cafe for their meetings so the police could never be apprised of them. Little Pierre always went along, his tiny legs racing to keep up with his father's long steps. What a pet he was to these cutthroats and how carefully they watched their language in his presence.

Then, to complicate matters, I came down with para-typhoid, followed by jaundice. Philippe cared for the children and nursed me through it. When it was over he confessed that he looked back upon his days in the trenches as one of the more peaceful interludes in his life. One day he took both the

children out for a little air and I was left alone to my misery when the proprietor rushed up to my room. The Germans were searching the hotels. This, you must remember, in what is euphemistically called "free France." I dragged myself from the bed, pulled a coat on over my nightclothes and, over that my shabby old mackintosh, into the pockets of which I stored our little arsenal of pistols. Then I made my way downstairs into the cafe where I hung the heavily weighted raincoat on a hook. Jock sat at a nearby table, watching me. I dared not speak to him but trusted him to understand my queer behavior meant more than a sudden attack of delirium. Then I went back to my room. A few minutes later two Germans arrived and combed through it thoroughly but our precious guns were saved.

I was getting sicker and sicker and Philippe had brought two doctors to see me, neither of whom could do anything. Finally his underworld friends took things into their own hands and sent me their physician, a young man, not more than thirty-five whom I am fully prepared to believe the most wonderful doctor in all France. His specialty, it appeared, was removing bullets and, with his particular practice, he had ample opportunity to practice his art. He arrived when I was most desperate for, at last, Philippe and his fellow conspirators had developed a plan which would not fail. Through one of the waterfront habitues, known to them only as Louis, they had arranged to buy a boat for themselves. Louis was to consummate the deal with the ship's owner. The money was en-

trusted to him and all was in readiness. Except that I was too ill to travel. Philippe agreed with the others that it was not fair to ask them to wait. They must go and we would take our chances later. Jock insisted on staying with us.

At the appointed hour, Louis met the fugitives and pointed out their newly purchased sloop in the harbor but seemed strangely reluctant to accompany them out to it. They were insistent and, growing more and more miserable, he went with them. On board, the captain greeted Louis eagerly. Was his money ready? Poor Louis had to break down and confess. The purchase funds were gone. Vingt-et-un had claimed them from him. Never had he had so much money in his hand at one time and never had he felt luckier. Obviously it would have been silly not to run the money up into a veritable fortune. But fate had played against him and put him up against a croupier who was obviously crooked. This conclusion was inescapable. Had not Louis Lost?

Back once more the hapless party came to Marseilles, Louis profuse in his apologies. His heart was broken, but, alas, that didn't help much. He would try to borrow, work his fingers to the bone, he would steal even from his friends, to reimburse the messieurs who had so mistakenly trusted him. But Jock

and his friends had a different idea. When they returned to Fort St. John that night, they dragged with them a protesting Louis, forcibly shanghaied and held prisoner in the fortress by the prisoners themselves. The final irony was reserved for the next day when Louis somehow got word of his plight to his girl...an inmate of one of the brothels... and she, in outraged protest, sent the gendarmes to rescue him.

During these weeks I had been corresponding feverishly with my new friend in the Ministry at Vichy and he kept urging patience. Then, a week after this occurrence, Philippe and I were surprised by the papers arriving. At least for me and the children. No permit could be obtained for Philippe. Ill as I was, I refused to leave without him, but he insisted. It would hardly make his lot a happier one to have me and the children share it. We must get to food and decent shelter. Triumphant, I croaked that it was impossible for me to leave. I was too ill to travel. Philippe presented the problem to my new physician. I was still running a temperature of 103 and he shook his head gravely. "Madame is right. For her to travel now would be fatal. But Monsieur is also right. She and the little ones must leave. In five days I will have her temperature down. Monsieur can arrange the necessary visa. She will be ready." I have no idea what he gave me, but he visited me four times a day, each time giving me an injection. And on the fourth day my temperature was normal.

I was more and more miserable at the thought of leaving my husband and, on the very morning of the day I was to leave, while he was out, a telephone call came for him. I answered it. A voice at the end spoke softly. "This is a friend, Madame," it said. "You must warn your husband to get a lawyer. The police know of his activities with the smugglers and he is to be arrested."

When he came home I told him of the message and pleaded to be allowed to stay. But the warning made him all the more determined to get me off. Firmly he escorted me and the children to the station, the ubiquitous Jock carting our luggage. On the platform Lucille was waiting. She was going to accompany me as far as the Spanish border and see me safely across. May God bless and reward all of you, my friends of Marseilles, for your myriad kindnesses. I had what I was sure was my last glimpse of Philippe, standing on the platform in the rain, Jock's big paw on his shoulder.

The four day trip across Spain was a nightmare. My mind was filled with visions of Philippe being arrested, tried and executed. There was no food to be had. My money was taken from me. And through the window, whenever the train stopped, loomed a picture of famine and misery in the gaunt hungry faces of the people of Spain as they stared, silent and resigned, up toward us, praying for a stray crumb to be thrown to them.

I arrived in Lisbon, penniless and full of ever. Little Diane was just ten months old, that awful age for travelling, when a baby starts to crawl and won't stay put for a minute. Her face was one horrible bruise from a fall in the swaying train, and both children were weak from hunger. On the platform waiting for me was an American business man whom my friend in Vichy had wired of my coming. He had never seen me before but it made no difference. My own father could not have been kinder or more considerate. He got me to a hotel, loaned me some money, and saw that we were fed.

The next morning, still feverish, I left the baby in care of the chambermaid and, my little boy with me, headed for the British Embassy. The Ambassador then was Sir Walford Selby whom I knew. He had been called back to England that very day, so I had to content myself with an undersecretary whom I was privileged to see after a two hour wait. I asked him to get in immediate touch with my father, from whom funds could be obtained, and even more important, put me in contact with the British Intelligence as I wanted to report to them on the underground movement in France and also news of more than 1200 air men who wanted to join the Free French. Phlegmatically, he announced he would have someone communicate with me in the course of a few weeks, and in the meanwhile would I make a written statement. "A few weeks," I exploded. "This is an emergency, man, something must be done immediately. Besides I am far too exhausted and ill to make a written statement." To which the representative

of my native country replied, with perfect calm, "Madame, apparently it has escaped your attention, but there is a war on." At which point I hit the ceiling.

I tell this not to criticize that particular young man but the diplomats of all countries, except one. In England, and throughout Europe, diplomacy is a career and the man who enters it, by some strange alchemy, ceases to be a human being and becomes a diplomat. People no longer are people to him, but ciphers about whom forms are filled out and filed and forgotten. He never realizes that a person's life and hopes and dreams may be lying in that wastebasket beside him. He may be a man of infinite kindness to his wife and children but to the rest of the human race he is a lifeless being with no instinct for human trust and compassion. My own cousin, a childhood companion, is a diplomat now. He arrived in Lisbon during my stay there and I was horrified to discover that he, too, had been poured into the mold and could never be reformed into human clay. I have said that the representatives of one country offered an exception. These are the Americans. While the lesser officials in the American embassies are career men, the Ambassadors themselves are generally men who have been appointed because of political or social activity and have had none of the rigid training of diplomacy. But they have something better. If there is one characteristic the politician or the socially active person has, it is a liking and a feeling for people. The result is that while the Ambassador may not

cut a particularly striking figure at court functions, he presents a blessed relief in human understanding. And this attitude of his inevitably spreads downward through his subordinates who otherwise would be as stuffy as their European colleagues.

And, parenthetically, I'd like to add one word of praise and admiration for the American businessman. In all of Europe, he alone seemed capable of dealing with an emergency. Expense or regulations were never important when human lives were at stake and his kindness was consistent and genuine. It was really thanks to men like this that I got out of Europe and, later, here in America, was able to live.

I arrived in Lisbon on December 5th and it was not until the 25th of April that I was able to get passage on a boat for America. I was bitterly tempted to try to take the clipper to England but my last promise to Philippe had been to get the children to either Canada or the United States. Of him there was no word. I sent thirteen messages to him, through the Quakers, the Jewish refugee organization, the American legation, but none ever reached him. I thought he must be in prison. Then I learned he had left Marseilles, the police, I assumed, hot on his heels. But, beyond that, nothing. Then, in March, came word that he was on his way to join me. He had received permission to leave the country. I sat in that wretched pension, day after day, waiting for him. Weeks were to go by before I was to learn what had happened to him.

Realizing that Marseilles was no longer safe for him, he went back to Vichy. Two days after his arrival, Charles, his particular friend in the ministry, discovered his name on the police lists as a dangerous character. It was obvious that not only Marseilles but France was no longer safe for him. Risking his own security, Charles struck Philippe's name from the police lists, trusting that the erasure would not be discovered. Then, I shudder to think through what chicanery, he got hold of papers which testified that Philippe was not only licensed to practice law in England but also in Canada. This somehow opened an avenue of escape and on his claim of a practice waiting for him, to say nothing of a wife and family across the Atlantic. I must just add that even at this time at least fifty per cent of the carefully chosen Vichy officials were secretly hoping for an allied victory and were trying to help to that effect. Anyhow, the coveted "permit de sortie" was granted him. At which moment Philippe decided he must go back into the occupied area again and say goodbye to his mother.

At one point the line between occupied and unoccupied France ran between a little village and its cemetery. A highly successful smuggling operation resulted. A funeral would start off from the village and once the cemetery was gained, the mourners would leave the procession and others, waiting to gain the unoccupied area, would take their places and the funeral procession return. Through this device Philippe, masquerading as a farmer in peasant clothes, crossed the border and headed

for Normandie finally finding refuge in his own woods with the charcoal burners. The Germans, 200 strong, were still occupying the château and no one could take word to his mother of his presence, since no one was allowed near the château without official business. The oldest of the charcoal burners solved the problem. From the dim recesses of his memory he recalled that his father had once told him of a passage, running underground from the chapel at the edge of the estate, and coming out in the château itself. It was the old man's impression that it gave into Mé-mé's room, but of this detail he could not be sure. He would go first and try it. If it came out in another room the worst that could happen was his capture and what could the Germans do to him? Kill him? Well, he was already a very old man.

In the dead of night the patriarch disappeared into the chapel and, behind the altar, found the door leading into the long tunnel to the house and entered it. On hands and knees he groped his way, doubtless the first person to traverse it in at least half a century. Finally he came to the end, a closed door in front of him. Gently he pushed on it and slowly an aperture opened before him, a large oven in a fireplace. He climbed through and found himself facing my mother-in-law, a kimono hastily pulled over her nightdress and a candle in her hand. He must have been black as the night itself with soot and dirt, but when he spoke she recognized him. Quickly

he whispered his news and went back the way he had come to tell Philippe the coast was clear. Half an hour later Philippe was in her room and there he stayed hidden that night and all the next day. To his mother he told of his determination to resume the war with the British. And when he left he carried with only one thing. In an old potato sack were carefully wrapped the famous boots, and the golden spurs. In his ears was his mother's farewell. "Hurry back, my son. I am no longer young. And I want to live to know the pride of seeing you and your comrades march down the Champs Elysees when you shall have driven the Boches from France."

When he got back to the woods he had another farewell to say, first to the charcoal burners, and then to Maître Hocquard who somehow had heard of his return and waddled through the forest to find him. He took Philippe in his arms. "I have lost three sons, Monsieur, and two others still are in the hands of the enemy. They can do no more for France. The one that remains to me is still a little boy and I, alas, am old. We too can do nothing. We must ask it of you, Monsieur. We beg your premise that you will carry on the fight and that you will come back with the guns and tanks we didn't have."

He did not dare cross into the unoccupied area by the same route used on his way north, so he headed for another village where another system of escape was used. There the little boys, agile as monkeys, spent their nights high in the tree tops, softly whistling signals one to the other as the

sentries would pass. These pseude birds of the forest guided him to safety. And on the 24th of April, the night before I was to sail, he walked calmly into my room as if nothing had happened.

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It was May when we arrived in America and we came straight to California. We had a long overdue date with the sun. Once Philippe had got his strength back he tried to enlist with the British. But disappointment faced him. The British had agreed that all Frenchmen should serve with de Gaulle. It will be perhaps hard for Americans to understand this, but Philippe could not accept this decision. He wanted to fight against the Germans or the Italians, but, with the Free French, he would be fighting his own countrymen. His own cousins were still serving with the French Armies in Africa for instance. He could not believe that America would not soon be in the war. He would wait for that and join with them. But that dream too came to an end when the Congress passed by only one vote the draft extension bill. If the maintaining of an army was decided on by such a narrow margin, there seemed little hope that the Congress would come soon to a decision to wage war.

What personal and private hell Philippe went through, deciding on his course of action, I don't know. I am his wife, but I could not discuss it with him. From my window I would watch him, hour after hour, pacing up and down, the beach, his

brow frowning in thought. And then, quite suddenly, it was all over. I had gone into the village, as usual, to get the mail. When I got back I went into our bedroom. Philippe was there, sitting on the bed, Pierre by his side. He looked up at me and our eyes met. But neither of us said anything. There was no need for words. For on the floor beside him, glistening from the brush he still held in his hand, stood the boots, their spurs gleaming in the sunlight. The voice of Charles de Gaulle, heard so long ago in that barn in Brittany, had finally called him.

A week later, he was gone. To what far place duty will take him, neither of us know. His letters are few and the cables are fragmentary and terse. But shining through them like a flaming beacon is faith and hope and sureness of the victory that lies ahead. In him, and in his mother who still awaits him, stands France...in them and all their fellows who with the full determination of their iron souls decry the traitors who have sold them into bondage. I am far from them now but in my mind's eye I can see them, when the British planes come over, their arms outstretched in greeting. Those planes may bring them death but death is welcome if it brings their country life.

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Be patient, chère Mémé;

Do not despair, René, mon brave;

His promise is not forgotten, Maitre Hocquard;

Sleep warm, Mama Bakura;  
Your death is still remembered, La Mailleraye;  
Wait in your sanctuary, Marakura;  
Do not lose your faith, Monsieur le Maive.  
Thumbs up, Jock;  
Wait for him, you men of Normandie;  
He will come back.  
He will come back with tanks.  
He will come back with planes.  
He will come back with comrades.  
He will come back in golden spurs.

THE END