

# THE SEARCH

By Grace Livingston Hill-Lutz  
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They were hungry, these men, and unfit, when at last the order came to march, and they had to hike it straight up a hill with a great pack on their backs. It was not that they minded the packs or the hike or the hunger. It was the injustice of their treatment that weighed upon them like a burden that human nature could not bear. They had come to lift such a burden from the backs of another nation, and they had been treated like dogs all the way over! Like the low rumbling of oncoming thunder was the blackness of their countenances as they marched up, up, and up into Brest. The sun grew hot, and their knees wobbled under them from sheer weakness; strong men when they started, who were fine and fit, now faint like babies, yet with spirits unbroken, and great vengeance in their hearts. They would fight, oh they would fight, yes, but they would see that captain out of the way first! Here and there by the way some fellow would be picked up by the ambulances; and at last they had to be ordered to stop and rest! They! Who had come over here to flaunt their young strength in the face of the enemy! They to fall before the fight was begun. This, too, they laid up against their tyrant.

But there was welcome for them, nevertheless. Flowers and wreaths and bands of music met them as they went through the town, and women and little children flung them kisses and threw blossoms in their way. This revived, somewhat the drooping spirits with which they had gone forth, and when they reached camp and got a decent meal they felt better, and more reasonable. Still the bitterness was there, against those two who had used their power unworthily. That night, lying on a hard little cot in camp Cameron tried to pray, his heart full of longing for God, yet found the heavens as brass, and could not find words to cry out, except in bitterness. Somehow he did not feel he was getting on at all in his search, and from sheer weariness and discouragement he fell asleep at last.

Three days and nights of rest they had and then were packed into tiny freight cars with a space so small that they had to take turns sitting down. Men had to sleep sitting or standing, or wherever they could find space to lay down. So they started across France, three days and awful nights they went, weary and sore and bitter still. But they had air and they were better fed. Now and then they could stand up and look out through a crack. Once in a while a fellow could get space to stretch out for a few minutes. Cameron awoke once and found feet all over him, feet even in his face. Yet these things were what he had expected. He did not whine. He was toughened for such experiences, so were the men about him. The hardness merely brought out their courage. They were getting their spirits back now as they neared the real scene of action. The old excitement and call to action were creeping back into their blood. Now and then a song would pipe out, or a much abused banjo or mandolin would twang and bring forth their voices. It was only when an officer walked by or mention would be made of the captain or lieutenant that their looks grew black again and they fell silent. Injustice and tyranny, the things they had come out to fight, that they would not forgive nor forget. Their spirits were reviving but their hate was there.

At last they detrained and marched into a little town.

This was France! Cameron looked about him in dismay. A scramble of houses and barns, sort of two-in-one affairs. Where was the beauty of France about which he had read so often? Mud was everywhere. The streets were deep with it, the ground was sodden, rain-soaked. It was raining even then. Sunny France!

It was in a barnyard deep in manure where Cameron's tent was set up. Little brown tents set close together, their flies dovetailing so that more could be put in a given space.

Dog weary he strode over the stakes that held them, and

looked upon the place where he was to sleep. Its floor was almost a foot deep in water! Rank, ill smelling water! Pah! Was this intention that he should have been billeted here? Some of the men had dry places. Of course, it might have just happened, but—well, what was the use. Here he must sleep for he could not stand up any longer or he would fall over. So he heaped up a pillow of the muck, spread his blanket out and lay down. At least his head would be high enough out of the water so that he could not drown in his sleep, and with his feet in water, and the cold ooze creeping slowly through his heavy garments, he dropped immediately into oblivion. There were no prayers that night. His heart was full of hate. The barnyard was in front of an old stone farm house, and in that farm house were billeted the captain and his favorite first lieutenant. Cameron could hear his raucous laugh and the clinking of the wine glasses, almost the gurgle of the wine. The thought of Wainwright was his last conscious one before he slept. Was it of intention that he should have been put here close by, where Wainwright could watch his every move?

As the days went by and real training began, with French officers working them hard until they were ready to drop at night, gradually Cameron grew stolid. It seemed sometimes as if he had always been here, splashing along in the mud, soaked with rain, sleeping in muck at night, never quite dry, never free from cold and discomfort, never quite clean, always training, the boom of the battle afar, but never getting there. Where was the front? Why didn't they get there and fight and get done with it all?

The rain poured down, day after day. Ammunition trains rolled by. More men marched in, more marched on, still they trained. It seemed eons since he had bade Ruth and his mother good-bye that night at the camp. No mail had come. Oh, if he could just hear a word from home! If he only had her picture! They had taken some together at camp and she had promised to have them developed and send them, but they would probably never reach him. And it were better if they did not. Wainwright was censor. If he recognized the writing nothing would ever reach him he was sure. Still, Wainwright had nothing to do with the incoming mail, only the outgoing. Well, Wainwright should never censor his letters. He would find a way to get letters out that Wainwright had never censored, or he would never send any.

But the days dragged by in rain and mud and discouragement, and no letters came. Once or twice he attempted to write a respectable letter to his mother, but he felt so hampered with the thought of Wainwright having to see it that he kept it securely in his pocket, and contented himself with gay-pictured postcards which he had purchased in Brest, on which he inscribed a few non-committal sentences, always reminding them of the censor, and his inability to say what he would, and always ending, "Remember me to my friend, and tell her I have forgotten nothing but cannot write at present for reasons which I cannot explain."

At night he lay on his watery couch and composed long letters to Ruth which he dared not put on paper lest somehow they should come into the hands of Wainwright. He took great satisfaction in the fact that he had succeeded in slipping through a post card addressed to herself from Brest, through the kindness and understanding of a small boy who agreed to mail it in exchange for a package of chewing gum. Here at the camp there was no such opportunity, but he would wait and watch for another chance. Meantime the long separation of miles, and the creeping days, gave him a feeling of desolation such as he had never experienced before. He began to grow introspective. He fancied that perhaps he had over-estimated Ruth's friendship for him. The dear memories he had cherished during the voyage were brought out in the night-watches and ruthlessly reviewed, until his own shy hope that the light in her eyes had been for

him began to fade, and in its place there grew a conviction that happiness of earth was never for him. For, he reasoned, if she cared, why did she not write? At least a post card? Other fellows were getting letters now and then. Day after day he waited when the mail was distributed, but nothing ever came. His mother seemed to have forgotten, too. Surely, all these weeks, some word would have come through. It was not in reason that his mail should be delayed beyond others. Could it be that there was a false play somehow? Was Wainwright at the bottom of this? Or had something happened to his mother, and had Ruth forgotten?

## CHAPTER XVII

The weeks rolled by. The drilling went on. At last word came that the company was to move up farther toward the front. They prepared for a long hike almost eagerly, not knowing yet what was before them. Anything was better than this intolerable waiting.

Solemnly under a leaden sky they gathered; sullenly went through their inspection; stolidly, dully, they marched away through the rain and the mud and desolation. The nights were cold and their clothes seemed thin and inadequate. They had not been paid since they came over, so there was no chance to buy any little comfort, if it had been for sale. A longing for sweets and home puddings and pies haunted their waking hours as they trudged wearily hour after hour, kilometer after kilometer, coming ever nearer, nearer.

For two days they hiked, and then entrained for a long uncomfortable night, and all the time Cameron's soul was crying out within him for the living God. In these days he read much in the little Testament whenever there was a rest by the wayside, and he could draw apart from the others. Ever his soul grew hungrier as he neared the front, and knew his time now was short. There were days when he had the feeling that he must stop tramping and do something about this great matter that hung over him, and then Wainwright would pass by and cast a sharp direction at him with a sneer in the curl of his moustache, and all the fury of his being would rise up, until he would clench his fists in helpless wrath, as Wainwright swaggered on. To think how easily he could drag him in the dust if it only came to a fair fight between them! But Wainwright had all the advantage now, with such a captain on his side!

That night ride was a terrible experience. Cameron, with his thoughts surging and pounding through his brain, was in no condition to come out of hardships fresh and fit. He was overcome with weariness when he climbed into the box car with thirty-nine other fellows just as weary, just as discouraged, just as homesick.

There was only room for about twenty to travel comfortably in that car, but they cheerfully huddled together and took their turns sitting down, and somewhere along in the night it came Cameron's turn to slide down on the floor and stretch out for a while; or perhaps his utter weariness made drop there involuntarily, because he could no longer keep awake. For a few minutes the delicious ache of lying flat enveloped him and carried him away into unconsciousness with a lulling ecstasy. Then suddenly Wainwright seemed to loom over him and demand that he rise and let him lie down in his place. It seemed that had stolen over him as he fell asleep was like heavy bags of sand tied to his hands and feet. He could not rise if he would. He thought he tried to tell Wainwright that he was unfair. He was an officer and had better accommodations. What need had he to come back here and steal a weary private's sleep. But his lips refused to open and his throat gave out no sound. Wainwright seemed gradually stooping nearer, nearer, with a large soft hand about his throat, and his little big eyes gleaming like two points of green light, his selfish mouth all pursed up as it used to be when the fellows stole his all-day-sucker, and held it tantalizingly above his reach. One of his large cushiony knees was upon Cameron's chest now, and the breath was going from him. He gasped, and tried to shout to the other fellows that this was the time to do away with this tyrant, this captain's pet, but still only a croak would come from his lips. With one mighty effort he

wrenched his hands and feet into action, and lunged up at the mighty bully above him, struggling, clutching wildly for his throat, with but one thought in his dreaming brain, to kill—to kill! Sound came to his throat at last, action to his sleeping body, and struggling him loose from the two comrades who had fallen asleep upon him and almost succeeded in smothering him, he gave a hoarse yell and got to his feet.

They cursed and laughed at him, and snuggled down good naturedly to their broken slumbers again, but Cameron stood in his corner, glaring out the tiny crack into the dark starless night that was whirling by, startled into thoughtfulness. The dream had been so vivid that he could not easily get rid of it. His heart was boiling hot with rage at his old enemy, yet something stronger was there, too, a great horror at himself. He had been about to kill a fellow creature! To what pass had he come!

And somewhere out in that black wet night, a sweet white face gleamed, with brown hair blown about it, and the mist of the storm in its locks. It was as if her spirit had followed him and been present in that dream to shame him. Supposing the dream had been true, and he had actually killed Wainwright! For he knew by the wild beating of his heart, by the hotness of his wrath as he came awake, that nothing would have stayed his hand if he had been placed in such a situation.

It was like a dream to hover over a poor worn tempest-tossed soul in that way and make itself verily; demand that he should live it out again and again and face the future that would have followed such a set of circumstances. He had to see Ruth's sad stern face, the sorrowful eyes full of tears, the reproach, the disappointment, the alien lifting of her chin. He knew her so well; could so easily conjecture what her whole attitude would be, he thought. And then he must needs go on to think out once more just what relation there might be between his enemy and the girl he loved—think it out more carefully than he had ever let himself do before. All he knew about the two, how their home grounds adjoined, how their social set and standing and wealth was the same, how they had often been seen together; how Wainwright had boasted!

All night he stood and thought it out, glowering between the cracks of the car at the passing whirl, differentiating through the blackness now and then a group of trees or buildings or a quick flash of furtive light, but mainly darkness and monotony. It was as if he were tied to the tail of a comet that dashed hellwards for a billion years, so long the night extended till the dull gray dawn. There was no God anywhere in that dark night. He had forgotten about Him entirely. He was perhaps strongly conscious of the devil at his right hand.

They detrained and hiked across a bit of wet country that was all alike—all mud, in the dull light that grew only to accentuate the ugliness and dreariness of everything. Sunny France! And this was sunny France!

(To Be Continued Next Week)

### Unchaperoned.

From the Buffalo Express. The last 16 years have witnessed the passing of two great institutions—the fire horse and the chaperon. Everyone knows what shoved the firehorse into oblivion, but what happened to the chaperon? and that brings to mind another question much like that old favorite about the hen and the egg, namely: Did jazz arrive the passing of the chaperon or was jazz responsible for his disappearance?

Turn back a few leaves of time and think what a swell chance you had of taking your best girl out for a whole evening without dragging mama or aunty. Why, they even tagged along if you dusted off the old one-seater of an evening. They lined the walls at dances. But those days are gone forever. If mother or aunty or even grandma declares herself in an evening nowadays she gets such a flood of flapper scorn—which, by the way, is no mean scorn—that it is many a day before she tries it again. Do they hop in the back seat of the little old blitzer? Not on your life—that is, unless the young man is trying to make a serious hit with the family.

Evidently the chaperon has a human appendix; nothing serious has happened now that she has gone. If it should be asked where she has gone, it might be suggested that she has probably gone where they used to wish she would go.

### Ask Bryan.

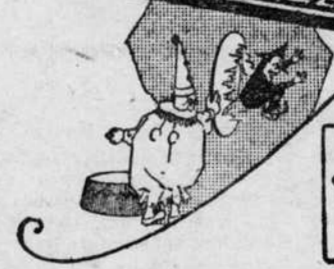
From the Pittsburgh Gazette-Times. Getting down on the floor and crawling to bed is claimed to be a cure for insomnia. Perhaps our early ancestors went to bed that way.

### Energy Wasted.

There's never any use of a man's learning a fine speech to say to a girl when he proposes to her, because she accepts him before he can get it spoken.

United States airplanes equipped with radio are making photo reconnaissances of sections of the Philippines where head hunting was formerly practiced by the natives.

# WRIGLEYS



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### CHANGED HER MIND SUDDENLY

Small Runaway Probably Had Good Reasons for Withdrawing Objections to Going Home.

Geneva, age three, had run away to visit her aunt, who lived across the street. The aunt visualizing accidents, in which figured little children and automobiles, lectured the little girl.

Then the aunt announced her intention of taking the runaway home at once as a punishment. All entreaties were in vain, the little guest was going to stay, and finally her aunt picked her up, her burden strenuously objecting, and started to the door. There the little girl saw her father just leaving his home on the trail of the fugitive.

Geneva's strident cries of objection died away as she stammered, "I—I must hurry back."—Exchange.

### At the Brink.

"Can I ford this stream?"  
"You kin on a horse. Kin your car swim?"



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