

Montgomery, Alexander
1945

APR 10 1945

524 E. 7th St.
Winston-Salem
April 8, 1945.

Dear Mrs. Macauley:

My name is Alexander Montgomery, a Negro, and a war veteran. I served in the armed forces sixteen (16) months. I was studying under public law 16 at the A. T. T. College of Greensboro, N. C.

I hope you will forgive me for writing to you like this, but I am in need of help, and I am writing to you because I believe you can help me.

As I said, I was studying at the A. T. T. College under the public law. But that didn't work. You see, it is with me, and I am in grave want of settling down, with a home and a wife and children. But don't we all want to do this? But from lack of means and luck, I could not know the kind of settled life, I would want. This that I am writing to you would not make sense if I didn't think that I had a way of providing these things that are uppermost in me. However, I do think I have

Alexander Montgomery
Alexander Montgomery is an
ably distinguished veteran of World
War II. He writes novels, short stories,
and plays. His play, "Dying Po-
etry," was produced by the Dying Po-
etry Club in Greensboro, N. C.
His publication "The Negroes
of the South" is one of the most
important literary works in progress in
the South. The 1945 "Letter of the First"
is one of his most important
works.

a way of providing these means, and that way is by writing. I have written several novels, one play, several short stories, and several poems. I have had several poems published, but really of no avail, the bulk of my work being still birth. One of my novels, Mine Eyes Have Seen the Story I wrote while in the Army. I am sending you let her be our Days from the novel Mine Eyes Have Seen the Story , and if you think, after reading let her be our Days you could endure the pages of the novel, I would be more than grateful to send it to you. Also, I am sending one of my poems. If you think my work has promise, and if there is anything you can do to help me, I will appreciate it to the highest.

I hope you do not think me silly for writing you, but the "set-thing down" business

is innermost and unex-
posed with me. It is hard
to be constantly, forever,
living between two worlds
for the one I am in I
do not feel, and the one
I crave for seems so
far in the distance.

Hoping, that you will
see something here that
is worthy of your con-
sideration, I remain -

Humbly & Obedient
Yours,

Alexander
Montgomery

524 E. 17th St.
Winston-Salem
April 3, 1945.

APR 10 1945

Dear Mrs. Bassett:

My name is Alexander
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Alexander Montgomery

Alexander Montgomery is an honorably discharged Veteran of World War II. He writes novels, short stories, song lyrics, plays, poetry and motion picture scripts. His play, "Dying Patient," was produced by the American Red Cross. Among his works ready for publication are "Dying Comes Hard" and "Mine Eyes Have Seen The Glory." Literary works in progress includes "The 13th Steps" and "Paradise on the Mourn."

"A Letter of the First Born Dead" is one of his most recent works.

LETTER OF FIRST BORN DEAD
She wrote a letter of the first born dead
To her husband overseas, to God over-
head,
To both she cried in regretful anguish
That she just bore a child—
A first born dead.

To her soldier over there, pity and
consolation,
For herself over here, hell and damna-
tion,
For all the blood they both had shed
All she could offer was,
A first born dead,
To him it would have meant courage
and wealth;
He gave life,
She gave death
That she bore a first born dead.

Then one day as she sat in remorseful
sorrow,
There came a letter from across the
water,
In it he said he felt no sorrow
That she bore a first born dead.

A first born daughter
But instead it strengthened him, he
said,
The heart felt regret, the courage of
the letter read,
Not in vain the blood they both had
shed,
That she just bore a first born dead.

For in the letter was enough for him
Relishing the promise she had tried to
fulfil.
The pain the disappointment of the
letter read,
A letter of the first born dead.

AS ARE OUR DAYS

by

Alexander Montgomery

A WORLD WAR II SHORT

Alexander Montgomery
Route #2
Cherryville, North Carolina

About 6,057 words

AS ARE OUR DAYS

I

The Second Battalion was returning from the front lines. Thus, Company B was returning from the front lines. It was early summer morning, and the day had dawned a still, psychological mist, air and gray. There was everything a yellowish green----the equipment, the men's uniforms, their skins, their minds.

The lines had been advanced several days earlier, and they were now marching over land that had known the hell and turmoil of battle, the drenching of blood. It was black from the smoke of gunpowder, and the constant shellholes had made it a struggle to cross. The men were brutally tired in the first place, and the dull surroundings bore into their minds which were already wracked with the ordeal of battle, and it was unbearable. These men weren't physically hurt, but psychopathically, and tired. They were quiet, and everything was still as they marched toward the waiting convoy of trucks behind the lines. Only the sound of their feet broke the silence.

On their way, they met still more reinforcements and replacements. Company B had been relieved earlier on that morning, and new men were still replacing them. There was a contrast

between the relieved and the relief, and it stood out plainly -- one, robust and brisk, the other, weary and fatigued. The weary men marched as automatons, and the new men looked on with "What the hell?" expressions. But only the weary men knew what "it" was like, and the new would know soon enough.

II

The Second Battalion was returning from the front lines----those that were left of the Second Battalion. Thus, Company B was returning from the front lines----those that were left of Company B.

It all had begun weeks earlier. The Second Battalion had been to the front as relief for the other battalion. Company B was typical of the other companies in the battalion of infantrymen, and the suffering they underwent and the problems they faced were typical of the other companies.

There was the line-up the day before they embarked on their hazardous task.

THE SECOND BATTALION, COMPANY B

CAPTAIN SAUNDERS BROWNING
FIRST LIEUTENANT RICHARD BEARING
SECOND LIEUTENANT ALEX MONROE
SECOND LIEUTENANT CARL B. READINGS

SERGEANT TAMES E. LORD
SERGEANT WILLIE NEWTON
SERGEANT J. J. JENKINSON

CORPORAL BRANNUS A. HILL
CORPORAL JOHN H. WALKER
CORPORAL IVANS P. CHILDS
CORPORAL N. NIVENS
CORPORAL FRANK LYTLES
CORPORAL RICHARD NAVERS
CORPORAL GENE RIETZ
CORPORAL GLENN MARIA
CORPORAL LADD DODD

1ST PLATOON
2ND PLATOON
3RD PLATOON

1ST SQUAD
2ND SQUAD
3RD SQUAD
4TH SQUAD
5TH SQUAD
6TH SQUAD
7TH SQUAD
8TH SQUAD
9TH SQUAD

III

They embarked on a new kind of warfare. They were sent to the wilds and hills of New Guinea.

They left the main base at four-twenty that morning. The convoy of trucks was a big parade, many miles long, and the roar of the motors was deafening, and the dust was tremendous as the trucks pulled out. When dawn came they were well on the way to their objective.

There was a firmness on the mens' faces as the trucks moved along steadily. They were still and quiet. They held tight on to their guns and leaned on them for support inside the truck. Only the constant hum of the trucks' motors broke the silence. Later the convoy was dismounted, and traveled onward by foot. Terrain features prompted this. The land was getting too unlevel, rough, and wooded for trucks. By noon the sound of the battle that was raging could be heard. The wooded entanglement and the purely jungle growth had been

reached now, and the odor of swamp came strong. It was hot and tough advancing among the jungle-like growth toward the front lines, and the mud and water was a great hold-back, too. There were many insects and snakes to be faced, and the mosquitoes came blinding at times. Mosquito netting had to be used. Shells were beginning to fall near now, and the entanglement geysered into the air, coming down splattering the men and making them even more dirty and sticky. Among the men, and in the thickness of the growth, it was hard to get any distance, so when a shell came down and made a hit, a lot of men were wiped out comparatively.

IV

This was a peculiar kind of war to the men. Fighting anywhere at any time. Knowing no lines. If knowing a line, it could be a very small one as well as a large one. Or there could be small lines scattered over the place confusingly. The Japanese made it that way. Because it was just as easy to find a few of them lurking in some unknown, unexpected spot as it was to find a whole regiment hiding in the bushes. And the Japanese snipers hiding in trees were a despicable hindrance. But the line that had been built was a strong one and a long one. And it was reinforced to the hilt. There were trenches of many designs: slit ones, dugouts, foxholes, some reinforced with .30 caliber and .50 caliber machine guns. Then there were the mortars. Some .81 m.m. There were other types of artillery along the line, but it was hard to get some of the

real heavy works here. When the men had reached the line, they fell in and relieved the others.

During the battle, which had already been raging in this sector for weeks, on some days they were outwardly attacked, while on some days they made the attack. When the enemy was weakened at one point and retreated, a new position was to be had. And when a withdrawal had to be made, then a new position was taken behind the old line. All in a bloody day's work.

V

The robust, redheaded captain of the company, early in his thirties, and from Nebraska, had said to his staff that night, "The Japanese have been weakened sufficiently at position No. 2. Our reconnaissance report shows that the enemy has had no contact with their main forces for days. The time to wipe out that position for good is now!"

The men of Company B had been told of the dawn that was to ensue: an attack was to be wedged! And those men who were going to make the attack had been relieved somewhat, so they would be fresh for the job.

Before dawn, the men of Company B who were to make the attack, were assembled and instructed clearly and straightforwardly by Captain Browning what their job was to be.

"Everyone of you men are new, out for the first time for real battle," explained the captain. "This position that we are going to take from the enemy is a weak one and an easy one, and can be taken easily without much bloodshed and death. It is

best that it be this way," he said; "it will give you new men the confidence and the courage you need, and the experience, too, is of the most importance, because you will gain by actuality what warfare is really like."

VI

The 2nd Platoon was ready. Everything was ready for the attack. Private Barns, a farm lad from Kentucky, with curly hair and freckles, said to one of his pals before the attack had started, "I bet you two dollars I am the first one to ram a Jap with my bayonet. Used to be a farmer, see, and I got the swing of it from a pitchfork. Oh bayonet, dear of my heart, don't forsake me!"

The captain gave the signal for the platoon to move out and begin the approach. The progression was slow at first, because the most fire was near the main line, and they could not move freely until they were some distance away from it. They had to move out from the line on their bellies. In approaching position No. 2 of the enemy, a lot of movements and special considerations had to be taken into reckoning. At times, the platoon would move on by squads and half squads. Some covered the others while they quickly advanced to some sheltering spot. Progress was slow and in a conceived manner, so the enemy would have to be exceptional to catch on to what was going on, and so they would be taken by complete surprise in the end. And when they had eventually reached a close enough spot to the enemy, they would reorganize completely and prepare for the

final "move-in."

VII

The captain gave the signal for the final move-in. Quickly the men are on their feet and are dashing in on the enemy, with guns blazing and bayonets fixed. They move in on the position and strike hard, never sparing their bayonets, their ammunition, their grenades at any moment of let-up. A bayonet is sent home in a Jap's stomach, and he becomes good and blood spurts all over you. The enemy tries to strike back, but the surprise element has got him, and he goes down trying to fight back.

After the reorganization of the 2nd Platoon and after the new position was completely organized, there were only a few who were wounded, and only one casualty. He was a young lad from Oklahoma. Before he died, he had suffered a bayonet wound. He was suffering unduly when the captain went to him, but he was able to smile when the captain spoke to him. "You are going to be all right, kid," the captain said to him, "as soon as we can get you to a doctor. Don't think about dying."

"Who the hell is thinking about dying!" the kid replied gallantly, although he knew he was going to die. "That is what I'm here for anyway, ain't it? To fight and die for a great country. So bring on the death bells on a silver platter!"

VIII

The next day fury raged along the main line. Japanese reinforcements had come up, and they had turned loose all their

might. A shell would whistle over and men were tense to know where it was going to fall. Men were sweating at their guns. The guns would get hot and make them do that. At times they had to let them cool or they wouldn't have one long. A heavy shell would pierce the line, and men and equipment would go up in bickering explosions. All through that day men were toiling, suffering, dying. And when night came they were tired and sleepy.

The sun flickered a smoldering red in the west, and another day of wrath was coming to an end. Captain Browning was tired like his men, and the days were bearing on him, too. "As are our days;" he was prompted to say to himself, "they are terrible ones. It's no use denying that. It's no use denying that they are hell on any man, and will tear him down. Yes, war is cruel and brutal. It's no use trying to make myself deny that, although I am a man!"

IX

The next day was begun by an explosion that wiped out a whole mortar squad. One man lived a little while before he died. He was in pain when the captain went to him, and was short in breath. He was panting. He was only a Private, but he was nearing middle age. There was firmness about him, and he possessed something rich and mellow of men. His skin was tainted from the explosion, but you could still see that his moustache was tawny. He was a large man and a possessor of "guts." The captain regretted dearly losing such a good man. He was from

New York. He had been in the garage business before he came to the Army. "Would you do me just one favor?" he was able to say as the captain bent down to him.

"A doctor now;" the captain said; "favors later."

"No time for that....only a little while to live...can't be moved. Tell me about America. Been so interested in the war haven't heard anything from the boys about her. Do they think we are losing?"

"Of course not," the captain said. "How can they think that, when they have men at the front like you? We are going to win this war. We are winning every day, because America is fully behind us. They are working day and night, too, like we are---in the airplane factories, at the shipyards, in the big offices. They are saving and giving everything they can get their hands on to us---so we will be happy. They are at war, too, and it is just as big and hard as this one!"

"Sure....just and big and hard as this one!" the dying soldier was able to murmur in his last words.

X

The rains came, torrential and furious. The clear days had been bad enough for the new men. Now it was rain. What was the psychological difference? What psychopathical impetuosity did the rain encompass? Well, it was like this: when morning came the men had something to carry them further onward, had something to inspire them through the next day of hell and turmoil---the transpirancy of the day. You don't know

how much it means to have the sun, a pulsating ball of fire, rising before you at morn, and to get the meaning of dawn, and a little cool, invigorating breath of fresh air to start the new day with, and to have a clear, blue sky above you. It means a hell of a lot to a soldier. Now it was rain and it was terrible, and the suffocating atmosphere bores into one's mind. The mud and slop pulls at your feet, and your clothes become sticky and gluey. It hinders the operation of mechanism and the firing of powder. It slows rapidity and agility. And above all, weighs on the mind. The clouds are hanging over you, and it seems they look to the mind for support.

That morning, Corporal Glenn Maria, along with his squad, was sent out early on a reconnaissance mission. He was to proceed north to the swamp, go through it, then northeast on a certain azimuth and then to the hills the Japanese occupied. After the destination was reached they were to scatter and obtain all the information they could while lurking in the bushes until dark. They got to the swamp. They were ambushed while crossing it. All were slaughtered except the corporal, and he had to drag himself back "home" in blood and pain. They got the three Japs that had surprised them, though.

This Corporal Glenn Maria was a young, twenty-year-old blond chap from San Francisco. He was hysterical from the encounter, but it gave him the courage he needed for the battles to come.

XI

At every spare moment of relief from battle, it was with the men to converse with each other and among themselves. It was good for them to be able to converse with someone; it relieved the mind tremendously. There was not much time for talk when the battle was raging. They always liked to say; it gave them pleasure to say,---"When the War is over --- "

And it always gave them pleasure to talk about Ma's cooking. "I can smell it now. Ma's pies. Oh, how would I like to have one of her juicy steaks now. Can't you see it? Smoldered in hot, yellow, running butter!"

They liked to talk about the Saturday nights' dates. "I can see the moon now. Forever glowing bright in the firmament. And there is a breeze coming from the lake, and the moon is making it a cold blue, and it is shining and still. I can feel the moisture of her lips now!"

And, too, their plans of the future. "I am going into the movie-show business after the War. Gonna build a home.... gonna have a little wife and kids!"

XII

"The dirty son of a bitches!" exclaimed Corporal Ivans P. Childs, in his response to an incident that had just happened. He was a well built, blue-eyed kid from North Carolina.. He went on, "The God damn, yellow, dirty son of a bitches!"

He was talking about the Japanese. Well, it had happened this way. The captain of Company B had beforehand told the

men about the thing. Said he, one morning: "Although you men are going behind the lines for a little rest and recreation, be careful. Because this is a nasty, dirty war --- we are fighting a nasty, dirty people -- the Japs. These hills are swarming with Japs like insects. It is just as easy to find one hiding under your bed waiting to kill you as it is to find them by the thousands at the front waiting to kill you. So, although you soon will be among your own, be careful!"

Well, the 2nd Squad of the 1st Platoon had been given this relief, and they had gone behind the lines for rest and fun. There was a swimming hole back there that all liked to go to when they were relieved. So that is where the 2nd Squad went when they were at last able to.

They were naked, and had no way of protecting themselves when they were fired on by a stray Jap, because they were in the water enjoying themselves. Corporal Hill had just remarked about the good of the water before the attack came. This was to be swell-day for the whole squad. Said he, "This is really good!" He splattered in the water with the rest. "Reminds me of the old swimming hole I used to go to in America as a kid." Then the stray Jap fired on them and slaughtered them all without giving them an even break. So the son of a bitch Jap was a God damn, son of a bitch Jap.

XIII

So Company B occupied the new position. And it was a

good one, too. It was a vital point for Jap concentration and movement before the American forces took it over. It gave the men plenty of natural protection and plenty of good visibility and fields of fire. It was a good advancement for the Americans in running the Japs out of New Guinea. It was reinforced strongly, too. Because they knew the Japs would try and take it back some time. "This is only a small bit of what we have to do here," explained Captain Browning in firmness to his staff, "but in the end, we will run every Japanese that ever contaminated this place, out; we will burn the bushes, if necessary, and make sure that the place is clean forever!"

And like it was predicted, the Japanese came down from the hill in hordes, pounding on the door of position No. 2. They came in storms. The position was a strong one, though, and it held through all the tumult. Japanese were slaughtered after Japanese, platoons after platoons, companies after companies. The Japanese were a reckless bunch, defying death. They would come in at you in the wide open, and knowing, too, that is purely suicide. Company B liked for them to do that. Let them come like hell, if they could swallow all the lead they had waiting for them. The more of this, the more less Japs. The machines of American guns would become hot, and the men were sweating and were burning their hands as the machine guns sputtered death unto the Japanese, and the guns were hard to steady, like a ferocious mare. Yes, the Jap forces pounded at them again and again, and were slaughtered.

XIV

A new offense was wedged some days later, and the whole main line was advanced farther into the hills. But it cost a lot of men and suffering. Fury raged on those tumultuous days. Japanese forces would drop heavy shells on American forces, and American forces would drop heavy shells on them. Flesh and metal went up in beckoning smoke. Shattered steel disintegrated. The earth shook. This was war!

As are our days then! Only the men on the field know that one. Only men who are witnessing other men die and suffer by the thousands know that one. You can see them day after day fighting and dying. You can see them knowing no peace of mind or body. You can see them with their hearts heavy and their minds wracked. You can see them with their feet like lead. You can see them praying. You can see them working gallantly under fire. You can see them sacrificing their own life for others. You can see a divine companionship grown up among fighting men. You can see them trying to seek realization. You can see them trying to find courage and faith in the dark of days. You can see terrible days --- if you are there. You only half see it if you aren't. So as are our days, and the days to come!

XV

World War I came. World War II came. Men were in both wars. Some good, some one-fourth good, some bad. Some fighting

for the devil, some fighting for the Lord. In both cases men were dying. Yes, anytime war is thought of, just think of death and suffering. It's no use trying to deny that! Men don't do it on the battlefield! Yes, the War came....Mobilization came....Human suffering came....Glory came....Mighty are our days!

The men of the second battalion saw that. They tried not to deny it. They want no one else to try and deny it.

Yes, some days were hell, and mens' hearts were heavy. Sometimes they felt like saying and crying to the world, "I don't want to go on; it isn't worth it!"

So, don't try and deny that war is hell. The men who know don't, and it hurts because the world doesn't want to listen to them.

But men will fight for their home and children and country --- that is what carries them through a war. So the war hasn't ended yet. That is why The Second Battalion fought on, and Company B. And it will go on just as furious until bad is dead and good is flowing.

XVI

This was war, and men were toiling laboriously. The Red Cross and the Medical Corps were at work with the wounded. Forever going right up to the front lines under fire to get the wounded and the hurt. And it was a big job. Day and night you could see the ambulances flowing. Back and forth from the main and field hospital. You could see the doctors at work in the main hospital. You could see them at work in the field

hospital. You could see them out on the field giving an emergency transfusion or an emergency operation. You could see strain and worry on their faces. You could see them clenching and gritting their teeth and sweating. This was war!

To the East a tank battle was raging. The tank corps was toiling. Tanks are mighty and monstrous. So tank battles are mighty and monstrous. So much clashing of heavy metal. Their big guns spitting fire. And noise thunderous, and men being destroyed.

The field artillery was blasting away with their big guns, too. Blasts that shook the earth, and with power of lightning. The trees around quivered and died with the mighty blasts. The day resounded in thunder.

XVII

This was the outgrowth of war. Company B were having their time, too. The rain had somewhat hindered American supplies from reaching the different forces and they were falling short on equipment in some places. So was Company B. The messenger reported to Captain Browning, the commander of the company. He was excited. "The Japanese are coming by the thousands! They are coming from the West with plenty of heavy artillery!" He gave Captain Browning the message from the regimental commander: Withdraw!

The men were gathering their equipment for a quick withdrawal, and there was fury. After the men were together, ready to withdraw, Captain Browning had something to say to them.

Said he: "Orders are that the Japanese will have to come through the gap up at Sniper's Ridge. Now if we could put a good man up there with a good machine gun, he could do a hell of a lot to the little yellow devils as they came through"

That was the captain. He never gave an order like that outwardly. He always beat around the bush and the men would respond of their own will. The captain had meant he wanted someone to expend himself for the job. It always worked, though.

"I will take that job and gun!" Private Lannington said. He was tough, too. He had not been in the Army long, but he was a good soldier and was up for a rating. Suave, blackheaded, he was from Philadelphia. He was but a playboy before he came to the Army. He was serving his country now, said he.

"No, I will take the gun!" said Private Wiljohn. He was a decent, intelligent looking man from Iowa. He was interested in flying sport planes before he enlisted in the Army.

That's the way it was among Company B. Someone willing to sacrifice himself for others. Not always for a whole platoon or company, but sometimes for just one man.

"No, I will do it," said Private Lannington again. "I don't have a wife and kid back home!"

And it is amazing, too, how calmly men are willing to face death on the battlefield. It puzzles them, in fact. Because they go back and remember times they have been sick or had pneumonia and how afraid they were because they thought they

were going to die. Now they were facing death, cold and real, calmly!

So Private Lanningon was the one to be expendable. But someone else wanted to be the one, because Lanningon was "much more a better guy than some of them."

"Listen, men," said Private Lanningon; "in a little while thousands of dirty, little, yellow men will be swarming through the gap. They will be coming after us with but one thought in mind --- murder. Now, are we or are we not gonna have a man up there with a machine gun? We are not if this keeps up!"

So Lanningon went, and two other men helped him lug the machine gun and ammunition up to the gap. "I wish we could stay with you," said the two men, "but orders are orders. So long, kid; I know you will give them hell!"

Lanningon would be there, and he would let his machine gun sputter death unto the Japanese until he was dead.

XVIII

That was only one of the many times men of the Second Battalion expended themselves willingly. Take the time when Company A withdrew. The overwhelming forces of the Japanese were to come in hard and destroy them. You could hear them coming like bees when the men of Company A finally withdrew. A lot of things had to be left behind; take the ammunition, for instance. No way to carry it. No trucks. Shall we ignite it, then? Yes. But wait! I have an idea. Why not wait until the enemy are coming, swarming down, and then light it! Sure!

attached to it were two boxes of dynamite, or better, T.N.T.

Thousands of Japanese and heavy artillery mounted on wheels sped around the bend. There was gladness spelled on their faces, and they were displaying gallantry about something. About what, no one knows. But still they were displaying it.

Then a rockening explosion shook the earth and debris tore itself loose from the side of the mountain. It was horror and death for the gallant Japs. You saw their vehicles buried beneath soil, and you saw them with their eyes wide open buried beneath it. The explosion was thunderous and mighty. It was mighty because an American went up with the debris and sacrificed himself for his country!

XX

So that's how it happened. And now the men were returning from war. The Second Battalion and Company B. Some were going back for rest. Some were in the hospital. Some were dead. Some would be sent back to America to display their D.S.C'S. Some were only to be remembered.

Anyway, after Company B is reorganized, we see what is left of the company before.

THE SECOND BATTALION, COMPANY B

CAPTAIN SAUNDERS BROWNING
SECOND LIEUTENANT CARL B. READINGS

SERGEANT JAMES E. LORD

CORPORAL RICHARD NAVERS
CORPORAL GENE RIETZ
CORPORAL GLENN MARIA
CORPORAL FRANK LYTTLES

2ND PLATOON
3RD PLATOON

4TH SQUAD - 3
6TH SQUAD - 2
7TH SQUAD
8TH SQUAD - 5
9TH SQUAD

First Lieutenant Bearing was killed when American forces met the Japanese at the river. Second Lieutenant Alex Monroe was killed by a Japanese sniper. Sergeant Willie Newton was killed by a heavy shell that came down on him. Sergeant J. J. Jenkinson died of a bayonet wound. Corporal Ladd Dodd was slaughtered at the swimming-hole, along with his squad. Death of others was probably violent but unknown.

Back at the main hospital, the men of Company B who were there were suffering. There was the sight red and white, sheets and blood. There were the men and women in white working with the wounded. There was the sight of men in convulsion and vexation. There was the sound of men hollering in hysterics and pain.

Now there were many strange and painful cases the doctors had to cope with. Some men with chunks of metal in their heads. Some with holes in their throats, Some cases of contusion. Some with eyes burnt out. Some were psychopathical cases.

XXI

There were many men from different branches of the Service here. There was David Thorne from the Marine Corps. There was

Richard Camden from the Air Corps, and James Malone from the Parachute Troopers. There was Aram Hiram from the Signal Corps and Carl Anderson from the Tank Corps. And Jacob Beech of the Navy. All had been hurt in battle some way.

John Valjean of Company B lay in his bed. Of body he stood six feet tall and was a possessor of tight, gaunt muscles. His hair was a bronze color and his eyes blue. He lay there in his bed, seriously ill. Captain John Valjean, he was. After he was wounded, Captain Browning had replaced him as commander of the company. He had been ill in the hospital for some time, and he felt now that he was going to die; he knew it. He had been in the engineering business before he enlisted.

To the men the Red Cross workers and the nurses were more than just endeavors of medicine -- they were an emblem. An emblem of mercy and eternal faith. The men always looked to them for faith and comfort in the last hour. Yes, the war would have been incomplete without them.

Such was Lieutenant Mary Winter. All of the men loved her because of her beautiful nature and body. She was a Florence Nightingale, forever trying to comfort the wounded and offering them faith and courage in dark hours.

Mary Winter was beautiful. Her hair was blond, mixed with a few strokes of brown here and there. Her nose went out cute and sharp, and was small, and her complexion like roses. She and Captain Valjean were in love, and the both of them were undergoing terrible and cruel hours because he was going to die.

She had gone to him. His fever was high and his mouth and lips hot and dry. She was soothing his lips and brow with a cool towel. Oh, how she wished her lips were that cool and she could sooth him that way. The hour was nearing. She was hurting, too, and suddenly she broke into a cry. When he was conscious enough to realize she was there, he strained to say, "Mustn't cry....must let it make you stronger!"

God, she was admiring him more now. His hair, the hair on his arm, the perspiration, the veins that stood out gaunt. She was hurting because so much solid flesh had to go.

"Mustn't cry....mustn't cry....mustn't cry....mustn't cry..." That's the way Valjean's mind was running. So ill and weak it was a struggle to change a thought. He would say something and it was repeated involuntarily.

XXIII

John Valjean was going, and Mary Winter was hurting, and he was hurting, too. "Won't die....won't die...will live within you...will live within you!" John was murmuring.

"Oh God, so many men, and now it's my John!" Mary cried.

John murmured on in delirium. These were his last words; "Men don't die....men don't die.....what they do lives forever... what they do lives forever....."

"You will live within me---" Mary murmured.

That night, when Mary was leaving the hospital, she went out into the night, and there was something cold and still about

it. No, the war was not over because she had lost her John. She looked and she saw flares to the east and she heard airplanes overhead. She was hurting and there were tears with her, and her lips were quivering. She murmured and looked to God, "Men don't die....because what they do lives forever...!"
