

One is essentially there for work alone, see the soot that has stained her forearm as she made up the fire, she has not had time to wash her slipshod dress, the liquor stains on her apron and her face, unkind though it be to state the fact of such plainness'. The other is in a strong and pleasing contrast. Though small she is quite a beauty, a perfect little figure in a well cut skirt, neat blouse, nicely shod and prettily coiffeured, and with a face of decided piquancy and a complexion many would envy. She wears a smart brooch - M.Z.R. in gold on a silver fern; but doubtless she has many regimental badges that the lovesick New Zealander, watching her every movement, will never see. Look at the tables;- here indeed, are the ends of the earth come together; Australians, Canadians, Scotch, English, New Zealanders, talking in every twang, accent and dialect imaginable, reinforcing the chorus being blared from the gramophone. In the corner, a somewhat tight Tommy reiterates his request for a "Woodbine," nearby, a man who from his circular color patch, is a "Bullecourt chap" strenuously argues the toss with a "Hard thinker," who judging by his face and frame, will fight even harder than he thinks. Here and there eggs and chips being consumed, and washed down by Bock, when suddenly Madam grabs a beer bottle, thunders it on the counter and shrills out, "Eight O'Clock fini," which she repeats for the next few minutes like a parrot. The Mademoiselles too, take up the cry, and slowly and reluctantly, chairs are pushed back, and figures lumber out of the door, at which the petite Mademoiselle stands bidding the parting guests "Bon Nuit, Monsieur."

The fellows outside, separate into knots of two or three and saunter billetwards, continuing the arguments that never end.

A little later, standing in the darkness of the deserted street, other and graver sounds arrest the ear. The splitting crack of an 18-pounder reverberates hollowly among the houses down the Chapelle d'Armentieres, in the distance the ring of iron hoofs on the hard cobble road, and the rumble of wheels tell of the Infantry transport on its way up to the trenches with rations and material for the maintenance of the line. Suddenly a party of men swing round the corner, the sound of their marching feet echoing in an eerie manner from house to house. Talking, grumbling, joking, they are off to carry out a relief to the Front Line; a match struck by their Corporal, gleaming on his "tin lid" and pack and gasmask suggests an armoured knight of old.

As the night grows older, the town became more and more like a place of tombs, long dead and forgotten. Oft-times one could walk the whole length of its silent and deserted streets as completely solitary as if he paced the weed choked ways of some African city of a bygone age.

The strange colored, instant blaze of a gun flash or the throbbing incandescent glare of a very light, made the quick following darkness, more impenetrable; it seemed to press upon one from all sides like a sentient thing, tangible and evil, and conjured up all the visions of spies and murders that rumor spread broadcast in the months of January and February. To tread at midnight, the narrow, twisting alleys that led from street to street, shut in by high walls with dark doorways and forbidding tunnels leading to mysterious courtyards, was to conjure up the vision of one of the many mysterious disappearances of soldiers then so common.

In the light of day, free from the glamor and mystery of the night, life in Armentieres is steely hard and business-like. The train routes are crowded with traffic, nearly all connected with the business of war; men in twos and threes and formed parties, some fresh from the trenches, their putties protected by irregularly torn sand bags, their breeches smeared with clay, tramp wearily back to billets, others with tunics open at the neck and hats perched on the back of their heads, stroll along from nowhere in particular, to a destination just as vague, the inevitable cigarette adhering to their lower lip or dangling lazily from the corner of the mouth.

General service waggons filled with brick rubble from the battered Church near Chapelle d'Armentieres rattle along on their way to some wagon line.

An ambulance wagon driven at a great pace weaves a precarious way through the traffic, giving one a glimpse of muddy boots protruding from under the blankets sheltering shattered bodies. Presently along comes an essentially French contrivance, a vehicle running on broad tired wheels and driven by a Frenchman in very dirty clothes, followed by a great cylindrical tank on wheels with a glass gage on the side. This "turn out" has a very intimate association with the City's sanitary arrangements. Once seen, perhaps forgotten, once smelt, never forgotten. Fortunately, however, it never enters shelled areas, as the effect of a direct hit would be appalling.

If we turn to the right and follow train line, we soon come to a main road branching to left, leading to Chapelle d'Armentieres. The buildings here display dilapidation in varying stages. Here one can see the effect of modern war. What was once a prosperous and good residential quarter of the town is now little but ruins, a place to get rubble from to form horse lines.