

M. E. Buckland

Armistice Day  
Memories



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By CHAPLAIN W. B. HOGG  
(JOSIAH HOPKINS)

Parson of

**The Country Church of Hollywood**



**T**HIS ARMISTICE DAY will find me convalescing from a serious illness, and with plenty of time to think. One thing I have discovered is that the farther we get away from the stirring days of 1914 to 1918, the more blurred becomes many of the horrible memories. Have you ever noticed how Nature covers stumps and the decaying trunks of trees with prime vines? Just so memory mercifully allows the growth of forgetfulness to blot out much that was unpleasant in the yesterdays. So, I find it interesting today to note what memory has discarded, and what it has reverently kept for its shrine. The scenes that were beautiful and tender seem to have gathered a halo with the passing years, and those that were humorous have lost none of their power to make me chuckle. Thank God for both of them!

I wouldn't tire myself nor run the risk of boring the reader by attempting to give any historical sequence to these scattered memories, but rather I prefer to pass them on to you who read these lines just as they are flitting through my mind today.

It is not the roar of shells, nor the indescribably horrible hospital scenes, nor the long and wearisome marches that come first in my meditation today; but, it's the recollection of how the boys chafed and fretted under the scourge of the mud and the cooties! Honestly, folks, there was more complaint and rebellion in the ranks of the American soldiers on account of the rain and the mud in France, and the torment of the omnipresent cootie than there was from the hardship of front-line service!

It seemed like it was the wettest rain and the stickiest mud a poor bedraggled soldier ever saw! And the cooties were so personal and so familiar and so persistent in their attentions! I can see the boys now out in the sun pulling off their shirts and looking meticulously up and down every seam in their assault on the cooties. And sloshing through the mud, wet to the skin, sleeping in the mud—this would get anybody down! I have

## ARMISTICE DAY MEMORIES

Army food. I recall one afternoon coming up to a kitchen without a mess-kit. The reader must remember that the individual soldier carried his own mess-kit and cleaned his own. The cleansing of a mess-kit was a very simple process. About the best way was to get a handful of dirt and scour it and wash it off with a little water. But, there I was, with a kindly disposed cook who could offer me nothing from which I could eat, but he had some food, which, by the way, seemed to be all liquid. He took a dishcloth that could stand up unassisted, wiped off the top of a gasoline tank, put my food in piles on the tank, and I "fell to" with a vengeance! I don't think I ever enjoyed a meal any more in my life, and suffered no unpleasant consequences. It is funny how we get used to things, isn't it? It would be interesting to hear some doughboy complain this Armistice Day about how his dinner is served. If you could just remind him of some of his experiences, particularly in France! Today a faithful wife will prepare a sumptuous meal and softly call the old doughboy to come in and sit with the family on this memorable day. Every one who complains at such comforts and delight should recall the summons that he used to hear when "chow" time finally arrived. A male cook would pick up the kitchen spoon, beat on a dish pan, and yell with a raucous voice, "Come and git it!" That never affected the appetite of the doughboy in France.



I don't know why I should think just at this time of that little Jew. He was from New York. He was a field clerk, a frail little fellow that wore thick glasses. I don't know why in the world he ever got caught in the draft. He came timidly to my office when we were at Camp Dix, New Jersey, expecting to sail for France any day, and asked me if I could perform a wedding ceremony. By the way, I had trouble making arrangements to have my credentials recorded in New Jersey so that I could perform that ceremony. But, it was all fixed, and when the hour arrived, he came to my office with a pretty little Jewess who had come all the way from New York for the wedding. Their honeymoon consisted of perhaps two

## ARMISTICE DAY MEMORIES

hours' conversation as they sat on a bench in front of our division headquarters. Then, she caught a bus after tenderly kissing him goodbye and vanished from his sight forever. The next day we went into quarantine. They may have talked over the telephone, but they never saw each other again. He was in the headquarter's company of field clerks. That put him on the same ship, the *Caronia*, on which I sailed to France. I saw him on the docks at Liverpool, and then I saw him next at Pons, where the 87th Division took up its first position after it had crossed from Southampton and Le Havre and came by train down to Pons in Southern France. There came a day shortly afterward when I was called to see this Jew in a hospital. He had about come to the end of life's trail. I sat up with him that night. He died just before the dawn. He was delirious at times, but occasionally he had a lucid moment. During one of these he dictated a letter to his bride, and just before he died he smiled and asked me when I got home, to write a letter to his wife and say that surely God would be good enough to let them have their honeymoon beyond the stars! It liked to have killed me to go through his burial ceremony. We buried him in the corner of a vineyard near Pons, France. I can hear the firing squads as they fired three volleys in salute to a real soldier. I hear again the bugle blowing taps. The dirt looked so black, and the grave seemed so deep. The one tender thing in it all was an old French peasant woman, stooped or bent by the weight of years, who crept up to the grave after we had finished the military funeral, laid some little wild flowers on his grave, shed a few tears, and crossed herself. Keep that picture clearly in mind: a Jew, buried by a Protestant, Gentile Chaplain, and wept over by a Catholic, peasant woman in France. Just such as that brings one to know that there is a common stratum that runs through all humanity; tears are the same around the world, and under the skin we are all brothers, after all. In the glow of such sacred memories, do you wonder that here at the little Country Church of Hollywood, we believe that we should all love each other, and that God, before whom

## ARMISTICE DAY MEMORIES

we reverently bow and worship, is, as the Bible says, a God of love?



Have you ever noticed that shadows falling on a hillside can be chased away by sunbeams? Just so it is when a doughboy allows his mind to wander back amid the scenes of the World War. There were bright spots along with the shadows. I have no way of explaining why this memory comes along just at this time, but I am passing these meditations along to you who read this just as they come to me today. I don't know who told me the story. That's not necessary now, anyway. A group of colored soldiers were huddled up in a dugout, after having been driven back from No Man's Land with terrific loss. Their captain had been killed, and they were wondering who their next commanding officer would be, when into the dugout strode a Mississippi planter who had two bars on his shoulder, and in a stentorian voice yelled out, "I want an orderly to go with me, one who's not afraid." The captain stopped and looked over the crowd of colored boys all huddled there together and continued: "Do any of you know where the Southern crosses the dog?" One colored fellow answered, "Yassir. It's Morehead, Mississippi." You who do not know the ways of the deep South may not understand this story, but the captain was right. There is really such a place in the Mississippi Delta; the colloquial name for the Yazoo Division of the I. C. R. R. is "The Yellow Dog." The Southern Railroad crosses this Yazoo Division, or "The Yellow Dog," at the town of Morehead. This planter from that part of the deep South wanted a colored orderly from that section of the country, realizing that the tie between white man and colored man who trust each other was one that no danger could sever. I will guarantee you that this really happened, that they fought, and, if necessity demanded, died together!



This reminds me of a question that has been often asked me as an ex-chaplain in the United States Army:

## ARMISTICE DAY MEMORIES

that is, what was the funniest thing that I saw during the war. Two things always come up in my mind. One is an experience I had on the transport, Caronia, when we thought we had been hit by a torpedo, but which proved to be a false alarm. I don't know whether I have space in this series of meditations to recount that experience, but I should like to tell the other one which I have in mind.

I was convalescing in a hospital in France and in the same ward there was a New England officer, a courageous fellow, who had a very serious machine-gun wound, and he had great trouble making the grade back to health again. The physician in that ward suggested to me to try to brighten up this officer, and as soon as I was able to move about I would go over and sit by his bunk and try to make him smile, but it was a very difficult task. He was disfigured for life, for his wound was in the face, and he dreaded the time when he would have to go back home to begin life with such a handicap, should he ever live through it all. There came a day when we were able to hobble about the wards of the hospital together. We were walking down the corridors of the hospital. All you doughboys remember how they were built—off at right angles. We came to one ward where it was so full that some of the patients had to lie on beds out in the corridor, and on one of these beds lay a man wearing more adhesive tape than I had ever seen on one human being. He was a colored soldier from the South, and was about the worst discouraged person I had seen. When I spoke to him, he recognized my Southern accent and said, "Howdy, Boss."

I asked him, "What in the world's the matter with you?"

He said, "White folks, I'm about the worst wounded man in the whole war!"

I noticed a smile on the face of my officer companion, and I realized that here was my chance to give him a good treatment of real Southern fun. Don't misunderstand me. I don't mean that we were laughing at the

## ARMISTICE DAY MEMORIES

colored man. That was far from our minds but his attitude told the whole thing; his expressions were so different that one could not refrain from laughing, in spite of the fact that he was in a precarious condition.

So, I continued, "How in the world did you get torn up like this?"

The tears trickled down his cheeks. He said, "Gentlemen, the worst thing you ever heerd since you wuz born in this world! You see, I was a ahmunition bearer. You didn't know Captain Withers, did yuz?"

"No, I don't think I ever met Captain Withers," I said.

"Well, suh, he's a awful hard man. He's from the South, too. So I toted ahmunition up to the front on a mule, a mighty pretty little mule, sort of dun colored. The little mule I called Ella. Shore was a pretty little mule." And he choked up with sobs. I encouraged him to go on, and he finally continued:

"As I wuz a-sayin', they wanted some more ahmunition. Oh, they shore wuz careless with shooting arms! It's a wonder to me everybody wan't killed out; they jest shot every which a-way, and I couldn't bring up enough for the machine gun company. Me and this pore little mule jest a-gwinin' back-ards and for'ards. So Captain Withers he say, 'Isom, more ahmunition.' I say, 'Boss, you look a-yonder; they're shootin' across that place whar you want me to go.' And Captain Withers say to me, 'You old hypocrite! You is allers talkin' about Heaven. Here you're actin' like you is scared to die. Thought you said Heaven was yore home!' I tell him, I say, 'Yassir, Heaven is my home, but the Lord knows I ain't homesick!'"

We chuckled, and he went on. He said, "I says to him, I says, 'Ef you send me 'cross that there place whar they's a-shootin' at with them cannons, I'll tell you whar my blood's gwine to be. Gwine to be right on yore hands! That's whar it's a-gwine to be at.'" But the Captain, apparently, was obdurate. He insisted that Isom go. Isom said, "So, me and Ella, we started, and jest

## ARMISTICE DAY MEMORIES

like I told him, we hadn't gone over two hundred yards until one of them divilish arrowplanes, they seed us, and it seems like they do 'spise to have anybody bring in ahmunition! They shore is curious about ahmunition. He came over. I wan't payin' no attention to him, me and Ella, but, you know what he done? He drapped one of them bombs on us. That's what he done. I see'd the thing a-comin' down. 'Course I couldn't get away from it. It looked like it's body wuz as big as a flour barrel. But it hit de ground off a piece, and you could have put a automobile in the hole that thing blowed out. 'Course, didn't none of the bomb hit us, but might jest as well, 'case it blowed some dirt all over me, and it shore scared that pore little mule. Ella kinda histed up on her hind legs, folded her front feet, and then swung away. Yassir, that mule wuz as onconscious as she'll be when she's a dead corpse! She didn't know nothin'! 'Course, I couldn't go nowhars with a mule that done histed on me, so I jest laid right down by the mule and says to her, 'That's whar I'se gwine to stay at. You can go, but that's what I'm gwine to do!'"

I said, "What did you do, Isom?"

He said, "Do? Law-me, I never had no chance to do nothin'. That man drapped another one of 'em things a little more closer. This time it blowed dirt in that mule's ear. You say you is from the South, Boss? Well, you know how tender mules is about their ears. So, that mule rize. She couldn't stand it, and when she rize, I jest throwed my arms around my neck. I said, 'Honey, save yoreself and me!' And away we went. That little mule and me a-holdin' to her, and we'd been gwine several minutes till I says to myself, 'I better look and see whar this mule is gwine to.' I histed my head up, and you know one thing? That mule had got turnt all wrong. She didn't know whar she wuz gwine. She wuz takin' me jest as straight towards them German lines as she could go. I said, 'Uh, oh, I ain't lost nothin' in them German lines!' And you know what I done?"

I said, "Well, what on earth did you do?"

## ARMISTICE DAY MEMORIES

He said, "I dive off that pore little mule! Yassir, I dive off that pore little mule into a barbed wire. Yassir, I'se garmed up with barbed wire. I'se ruint with barbed wire. That's why all this here stuff is stuck on me. From head to foot I'm jest messed up with barbed wire."

"Oh," I said, "that's terrible!"

He said, "I done put in to get a wound stripe for each one of these hear tore places on me. There ought to be about a hundred." He was chuckling. He said, "I'll be kivered up with wound stripes, won't I?"

Well, I didn't tell him that he wouldn't get a wound stripe for it, but I said, "Well, what became of the mule?" By the way, my officer friend by this time was just about collapsed. It was just what he needed to break the tedium of his melancholia. He said, "What did become of the mule?"

"That's what I wuz a-fixin' to tell you. You know, down South, they charge the mules to the hands workin' on places, and I says to myself, 'They's gwine to charge that there mule to me.' So, I looked up from this mess of barbed wire whar I wuz at, and see'd the mule. She wuz way off, gwine right on. And when I see'd her, I said, 'Aw, oh, it ain't no use.'" Then, he stopped.

I said, "What do you mean, 'it ain't no use?'"

He said, "Did you know mules pretty well?"

I said, "Yes, I know them fairly well."

"Well," he said, "when I see'd the mule, she had done twis' her tail, and, Boss, when they do that in the South, it ain't no use. So, I said, 'The United States done lost one mule!'"

My officer friend went back to the ward very much improved by hearing this story.



Today I'm so glad that the hate that froze millions of hearts in 1914 has in the main been melted. How glad I am of this! It's so hard to realize now conditions that were prevalent in 1919. I think it was in February of that year that my old injury sent me to a German hospital in Coblenz. I was walking down the bank of the Rhine

## ARMISTICE DAY MEMORIES

River without my rain coat and, of course, not carrying an umbrella (no army officer ever carries an umbrella) and a sudden shower caught me. I ran several blocks and up the stairs of the headquarters building that faced the Rhine River, but I never made it up the stairs. I collapsed somewhere on the stairway and came to in a hospital which was on a hill behind the city of Coblenz. I had great difficulty getting a permit to be sent home. General Pershing had issued an order forbidding the return of any of the Army of Occupation to the United States for a fixed time. But some technicalities discovered by army friends in high places made it possible for me to leave Coblenz on a stretcher, locked up in one of the compartments on a German train. I was practically unconscious and several days later, it seems to me now, I heard voices speaking French. I unlocked the door and discovered I was in Nancy, France. This put me under the supervision of the Army Medical Corps and I was shifted about and finally came to Bordeaux, France, still confined to my stretcher. While I was lying in the depot at Bordeaux on a stretcher several nurses and some officers gathered around me, along with some of the French people and seeing the O. A. in red, white and blue on my shoulder realized that I was an officer from the Army of Occupation on the Rhine River. Naturally they were interested in hearing some first hand news from Germany. I found out later that I was the first officer from that area that these people had seen since the signing of the Armistice. Naturally, during hostilities nobody came to France from Rhenish Prussia except the prisoners. They began to ask me what kind of folks the Germans were. I said, "They are lovely people." I was all but mobbed by that crowd.

My good friend, Chaplain Petty, with whom I had worked as a base chaplain at Bordeaux, spirited me out of the crowd in an ambulance and rebuked me, saying, "You'd better keep your mouth shut. Folks are not ready for statements like that yet." Think of it! Such hate that they were not willing to get the facts

## ARMISTICE DAY MEMORIES

about the Germans! No, I am in no way connected with German ancestry. The fact is I am Dutch-Irish, but a sincerity from which I could not escape made me tell the truth. All those feelings or practically all of them are buried in a grave of forgetfulness. Thank God! Since I have been here in Los Angeles I have met some friends whom I knew in Coblenz, Germany. This brings me to another story.



After preaching one day in Los Angeles a gentleman and his wife and their lovely children came up to me and spoke to me. The lady said, "Do you remember me, Chaplain?" I replied, "I don't think I do." Imagine my surprise when the lady told me that I had been quartered in her home in Coblenz, Germany! I thought surely she must be mistaken, but she went on to describe some incident that happened in her home that assured me of the correctness of her statement. She said, "Do you remember that three chaplains were billeted in a German home in Coblenz and that the young ladies of the home, although forbidden by army regulations to have any conversation with the United States officers, played a joke on the chaplains one night, by putting salt between the sheets on the chaplain's beds?" I recalled how provoked we were when we retired to find ourselves salted down for the night. We couldn't imagine what had happened, and all these years that mystery had been unsolved. I didn't remember the young ladies, but I did recall their fine old mother who loves her Bible and who gave us every assurance of her unquestioning faith in God. It was a real Christian home and they were lovely people. My wife and I had the exquisite pleasure of being entertained in the home of these lovely people, Mr. and Mrs. Urbekeit, of Anaheim, California. They are often in our services and Mrs. Urbekeit has spoken over our local radio. She is a very active and sincere Christian, a member of the Baptist church of Anaheim. Mr. Urbekeit was a soldier in the United States army and fell in love with one of the German girls in this home which we have

## ARMISTICE DAY MEMORIES

described, and married her and brought her to California as his bride. Mrs. Urbekeit went back to Germany for a visit to the old home last year and it made me very happy to send a message to her mother. I have received a lovely letter from this dear old Christian mother on the banks of the Rhine River.



This reminds me of another story about Germany. Just before Christmas of 1918 I received a telegram announcing the death of a child. I didn't know for months and months that the telegram had been delivered to me through an error. There was nothing in the message that would cause me to question its authenticity. It was addressed, "Hogg, Headquarters, Third Army," and was signed, "Broken Hearted Wife." I had just received a thousand francs as a gift from General Pershing for a Christmas present. I cabled it to my wife, but the cables were jammed with official business, the message was lost and two years after the war my wife received the cablegram! The welfare agency which had been entrusted with the transmission of this message gladly paid me the difference caused by the shrinkage of the franc in the depression that followed the World War. But, back to my story. I had to keep off of the boulevards in Coblenz because I couldn't bear to look in the windows to see the toys. Little dolls and Christmas trappings took my mind back to 704 Wolf Street, Little Rock, and caused me to wonder which one of the five children had gone to be with the Lord. So I was sitting on a bench on the bank of the Rhine River about seven o'clock on Christmas eve night, just about as blue as a human being could possibly be. I noticed a little German girl about four years old pushing a doll buggy back and forth, just a few feet from me. I found out later that her parents had gone into a toy store to buy some Christmas things and left her there under the electric light to play with her doll and buggy. I couldn't resist the temptation to speak to the little girl. I understood some German. She told me about her dolly and we were busily engaged in



## ARMISTICE DAY MEMORIES

trying to understand each other when a man and a woman came hurriedly up to the child very much confused because she was violating army regulations by talking to an American officer. By the way, these strict rules forbidding fraternizing with the Germans were later rescinded, but for months after the entrance of the American troops into Germany they were not allowed to have any dealings or conversation with the Germans unless it was absolutely necessary. I noticed that this man wore the uniform of a German private and that he walked with a decided limp. I forgot the regulations and engaged in conversation with this German soldier. He understood a little English and I understood some German so we managed to carry on a conversation, though very broken. I told him about the death of one of my children. Tears came into the eyes of the man and his wife. I made them understand when I left home I had five children. Now one was gone and I didn't know which one. After a bit they walked away and stopped and talked together a moment and then the soldier limped back and made me understand that he wanted me to come to his home that night. I threw caution to the winds and told him to go ahead and I would follow a short distance behind him. This was dangerous business at that time, because if the M. P.'s had picked me up talking to this man in a social way I don't know what the consequences would have been, but in my grief one could hardly blame me. The truth of it is, I wanted to talk to that little girl and watch her play with her dolly. It was about all the Christmas that I could hope to have.

We had no trouble until we got to the bridge that spanned the Mozelle River, connecting Coblenz with the little town across the river, the name of which I have forgotten. The guards stopped me but when I presented a white pass, which was held only by the attaches of Advance Headquarters, they allowed me to pass. I came very near missing the German friend, but I soon picked them up in the shadows and followed them to an apartment house and up three flights of stairs into a typical

## ARMISTICE DAY MEMORIES

German home of the middle classes. The dear little girl sang for me German nursery songs and all of us sang together Silent Night, Holy Night. The German told me that he was wounded at Chateau-Thierry and that he was a mechanic and he managed to make me understand that his dreams for years had been to come to America, get out of that war-torn country, and asked me about the possibilities of such a thing. We had family prayer together and said goodnight. As I turned to leave I realized what a dangerous thing I had done and I knew that I couldn't come back. So I said to him, "Meet me Christmas night, same place, by the bench on the bank of the Rhine."

I hope the readers will forgive me when I confess to you that I bought some breakfast bacon and sugar, some chocolates and some bars of soap. The whole thing cost me less than \$2.00. It was quite a nice little bundle and I never knew at that time the value of these things to the German people. I merely wanted to express in some little way my appreciation of that lovely Christmas visit in a lovely German home. So at the appointed time I was seated on the bench with my Christmas gifts for these people. I saw my German friend limping towards me. I got up and walked away and left the package on the bench. He picked it up, waved to me and thanked me and soon disappeared down the roadway on the bank of the Rhine River. What a surprise that little family had when they opened that package, for I found out later that the soap was worth \$5.00 a bar to them, the bacon \$20.00 a pound, and the sugar and candy beyond all means of computation! That little bundle that cost me less than \$2.00 was worth to them well over a hundred dollars! You see, I bought it at the Commissary. I never saw them any more and today I sit and wonder what became of the German soldier, his wife and their precious little girl!



Did you ever take a psychopathic test before soldiers called a "nut board?" Well, I have quite a number of

## ARMISTICE DAY MEMORIES

times! Several of these harrowing experiences happened to me at Bordeaux. My symptoms suggested a form of shell shock along with other troubles and all such injured men had to successfully pass the "nut board" test before they could be sent home. Three times I went before the board only to be classed as a "nut" and sent back to my ward! They asked the craziest questions. They got the patient so confused he didn't know east from west. I tried every method in the world to impress them with my sanity, but never succeeded. Believe me, that will take the ego out of one! Finally, I past the board by telling them a Southern negro story and getting them convulsed with laughter. I don't think I could have passed the board any other way. What a relief when the nurse came running into our ward one day and announced to three or four of us that we had been selected to sail for home the next day. What a thrill! I don't think I have ever had such a thrill like it in my life. I was so excited I remember few of the details about leaving the hospital and arriving at the wharf at Genicart, a few miles from Bordeaux on the Gironde River. I don't remember being carried up the gangplank, but I do remember lying on a stretcher on deck awaiting an assignment to a stateroom. I also remember that I realized that the boat was in motion and we were on our way home. A band was playing a song which I had never heard. The sailors were dancing nearby on the deck to the music of the band and they broke into the song, "There are Smiles that make you happy," etc. I thought it was the prettiest thing I had ever heard. It had come out and had its popular run while we were in the mud and rain and fighting the battle of the cooties somewhere in France. The thing that tore my heart was the realization that we were leaving behind, buried in France, thousands of the finest men that had ever lived! I became hysterical. A hypodermic ended that and I awoke the next morning to realize we were on our way home. We had hardly gotten out of the Bay of Biscay on the bosom of the great Atlantic when one of the worst storms that

## ARMISTICE DAY MEMORIES

ever ruffled an ocean broke on the ship, the Henderson. It was loaded with convalescing soldiers. They tied me to my bunk to keep me from rolling out as the ship pitched in the storm. We were in this storm for twenty-two days. Doubtless some of you remember it. The news dispatches said the SOS had gone out from the Henderson somewhere near the Azores. The first I knew of impending tragedy was the realization that the throbbing of the engines had stopped. An orderly told me that we were being driven helplessly before the storm. One of the shafts that drove the propeller had smashed and the ship was drifting helplessly while repairs were attempted. The SOS went out and rescue ships appeared nearby, but the sea was so rough the passengers could not be transferred to other vessels. For at least two days we not only failed to make any headway, but actually lost ground. After one of the roughest voyages ever made by a transatlantic steamer we landed in New York. Words fail me to express the joy that welled up in my heart when I was laid down on a stretcher on the blessed earth again. For days the ground seemed to be rolling and pitching beneath me or the hospital where I rested (the Polyclinic in New York). I lay there a period of time that escapes me now. About all I can remember is from my window I could look down Broadway and see the signs on the theatres flashing in the night. I recall that Al Jolson was playing in "Sinbad." Nearby I could see an electric sign with the words "Jane Cowl."

I was finally sent home, attended by an orderly, and on a stretcher, where I began to pick up the tangled threads of life.



Speaking of "nut boards" reminds me of an amusing incident that happened about eight years ago. I was in Chicago broadcasting on the basic network of the Columbia system and was ordered out to Hines Hospital for observation and rating for an officer's retirement because of injuries received in line of duty. I thought, of course, that I could go out there and visit the hospital through

## ARMISTICE DAY MEMORIES

the daytime and go home for my Columbia broadcast, but let me tell you what happened. It was all right until they classified me according to army records and put me in a ward, which was listed as D No. 3." I didn't notice at first that the windows were barred and that most of the fellows in with me were, according to my opinion, worse off than I was. In fact, some didn't know what it was all about. Six o'clock came and nobody said anything about me leaving. They had taken all my clothes, so I sent for the ward physician. He came in very kind, very considerate. I told him that I was on the Columbia network and would have to broadcast the next morning at seven-thirty. He said, "Yes, yes. We know all about that." I noticed him signaling for the nurse. They had a short conference and in a moment she gave me a hypodermic and when I came to it was too late the next morning to go to the broadcast. What a time I had convincing them I really was on the Columbia network, but I missed two broadcasts before they ever believed. They were very apologetic and very kind. I was finally able to make my broadcast and then come back for observation. There were some pathetic cases in that ward. One poor fellow was still in the Meuse-Argonne offenses under the imaginary bursting of shells. For all these years, eleven or twelve, he had never been able to escape from the horror of it all. When I was finally discharged after two weeks of observation and recommended for retirement as a lieutenant under the Fitzgerald-Tyson bill, for injuries received in line of duty, he followed me to the door of the ward and said, "Won't you take me with you?.. There's bound to be some way out." I tried to explain to him that I would have to go but he might have to stay for further treatments. I will never forget that pained look in his eyes as he shook his head and said, "Surely, there is a way out." Oh, reader, there is a way out for all our troubles, but the way out is always up. God holds the pass key to that place. I wonder how many today are reading these lines whose hearts are broken. Oh, you may be

## ARMISTICE DAY MEMORIES

normal mentally, physically, but you are shut in by impassible barriers. Will you let me whisper to you just this little word of preachment? God knows the way out. Put your hand in His.

I wonder if I have tired you with these flitting memories of the yester years. They are precious to me. I hope I haven't taxed your patience, but I guess I have reached my objective. At least, I have emptied my heart of some of the things that are with me as Armistice Day comes around again. But I am reminded of another story and with that I will close this little meditation.



The Armistice had been signed, but some of the labor battalions that had just arrived didn't seem to realize that the war was over. I noticed a colored boy carrying water to some colored boys who were repairing the road. Of course, there was no firing two days after the Armistice, but the officers had either mischievously or maliciously kept the knowledge of the Armistice from this labor battalion. I was standing by the road talking to an officer while the driver of my car filled up the tank with gas in preparation for our departure and I heard a terrific explosion. It shook the earth like gelatine. I found out later that they were blowing up an ammunition dump about half a mile away. I heard a patter of feet and looked up and this water boy had dropped his bucket full of water, had reached up and pulled his overseas cap off and had his head thrown back breaking all records for speed, coming right towards us. I ran out to the road as he approached and yelled, "Where are you going?" Without hesitating or breaking his stride, he replied, "I'se done been/ where I'm gwine." I watched him disappear in the distance. I wonder where he went?



So, reader, I guess I've done been where I'm gwine. So I leave this little monograph with you, with a sincere prayer that the youth of the land today will never have such memories as these etched in their souls.

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