

CHRISTMAS, 1918



BREST AND PARIS WELCOME HEAD OF SISTER REPUBLIC OVERSEAS

Continued from Page 1

Yankee aims got busy on their welcome... At the same time there put out from shore a lighter, conveying M. Stephen Pichon, French minister of foreign affairs...

Just then the formal welcome of France burst from the ancient walls of the city of Brest, from the quays, from the hills and trees, from every point of vantage overlooking the harbor...

And what a show of holiday apparel Breton put on! Ancient dames in herring-knit dresses, coats and aprons of marvellous embroidery were out on the city walls, rubbing their spare old elbows against those of all the Yanks and gobs...

Finery of Old Times

But the ladies of Breton had no monopoly of the gala garb, for all the old gentlemen of the famous old province had donned their distinctive velvet hats, their pea-jackets, their wide-brimmed sashes and their false but none the less resplendent shirt-fronts...

Meanwhile, down on Pier No. 3, where a brief day before Yankee Stevedores had been tossing the brown tin and hardback boxes into cars with a zeal that would have made Old John Boche, had he been so minded, think twice about trying to bust the armistice...

In gorgeous blue and gold and white and black there shone from the walls the coat of arms of the proud little city—the fleur-de-lis of royal France on one panel, the ermine of Brittany on the other, the joined fasces and emblems of republican France, with its graceful monogram; the flags of all the Allies; the coat of arms of all the provinces of France, and the old E Pluribus Unum, eagle, scroll, darts and all...

Outside, on the pier itself, Yank sentries paced nervously up and down, obeying in strict literalness that most general of all general orders—"to observe everything that takes place within sight or hearing"—politely reprimand-

ing colonels, correspondents and everybody who tried to sneak a smoke to take the nervous edge off the waiting process and generally keeping the scene of the landing in order. Aides, Stevedore lieutenants, special mission and liaison officers scuttled about, giving last minute instructions and counter-instructions to each other and to anybody who happened to be around. French fonctionnaires did the same; so did naval officers of both countries; so did everybody, until at last all things were ready.

At five minutes after 3 the lucky possessors of binoculars on shore could see the President's ensign being rapidly hoisted down from the mast-head of the George Washington. The moment for which everyone had waited all that expectant day was approaching. As the lighter Tundo, a leister-like, dapper-like sidewheeler, steamed away from the big liner's side, a mighty cheer went up from the massed thousands on the old ramparts, and 20,000 Yankee tars of the assembled fleet manned the rails and gave three rousing ones to boot. The guns barked anew, their flashes gleaming like fireflies through the fog. Far in a corner of one of the harbor forts the French field music sounded "Aux Champs." Down on the pier that awaited the President a French marine band broke into "The Star-Spangled Banner."

Tundo Draws Alongside

Now the proper thing to do when the National Anthem is played is literally to "face the music," to face it while standing at the stiffest attention and salute. The Yanks on the dock and near it, however, did nothing of the sort; they faced the President's boat, keeping their salute and attention the while. They relaxed for a moment when the band stopped for a breath, only to stiffen again as it crashed into "La Marseillaise." And then—and then the Tundo drew alongside.

"Where's the President?" the murmur rang along the pier. In a minute the well-informed and movie-frequenting spotted Secretary Lansing and gave him a great cheer, to which he bowed a pleased and dusky return. In another instant the A.E.F.'s own General Pershing was deserted, and a lusty roar of acclamation went up. Mrs. Wilson drew another tremendous shout as she stood there, with a little silk American flag in her hand, waving and beaming at all her delighted countrymen. But—and there was the question—where was the President?

The Tundo bumped up alongside the pier like an ungainly rook trying to do his part toward dressing up the line. Nimble Yank Stevedores and French matelots grabbed hold of the ropes, and in a trice had hoisted the red-white-and-blue-festooned gangplank onto its counterpoise on the lighter. With a final wrench and twist, a last creaking of cordage and timber, the way was made safe for the Presidential party to alight.

One by one the good gray-haired counselors, French and American, mounted the steps leading to the gangplank from the deck of the lighter and stepped ashore. At sight of them the long line of young French marines along the dock-side sprang to present arms, and their Jarlons sounded. Up to "present arms" came the sword of every French officer on the pier. But—where was the President?

First Citizen on Shore

More good gray-haired gentlemen, in frock coats and tall hats. More gray-haired gentlemen in olive drab and silver stars. More gray-haired gentlemen resplendent in Navy or horizon blue, with gold and silver decorations twinkling in the first bit of sunlight Brest had seen that day. And then—

"Oh, say, can you see, by the dawn's early light—"

The marine band fairly vaulted into those first stirring bars. The Yanks who had been fussing with the gangplank snapped to attention. The hat of

every civilian in the crowd was doffed as if by instinct. And across the narrow little bridge, with alert, quick step, but in hand and smiling graciously, as if with a keen and boyish pleasure in the sights around him, marched America's first citizen, come to repay the visit of America's first and oldest friend, the Marquis de Lafayette.

It needed only ears after that to realize that the President had at last arrived.

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NEW WATCH ON RHINE XMAS GIFT TO WORLD

Continued from Page 1

able column of olive drab melted into the all-enveloping mist. Not so the flag and the standards, when their turn came to cross the Rhine. Always they shone bravely from shore to shore.

It was the one touch of color in all that drab and cheerless morning, from the moment when, midstream, the river wind caught and flung them wide, till, dwindling, dwindling, they became only a point of scarlet in a curtain of mist, like a poppy blooming in the cranny of a gray wall. And always, faintly from the other shore, came the music of the band playing in the rain.

Massed Since Preceding Sunday

While the First Brigade, with ponderous trucks and smoking kitchens, moved over the pontoon, the Second Brigade was crossing by the beautiful three-span Pfaffendorf bridge near by. Below, the famous Thirty-second was crossing and below them the Second, while above, the Third had edged upstream a bit toward Bingen.

For this crossing, the troops had been massed on the left bank since the preceding Sunday, when the first cavalry trotted into Roman and the first infantry—a whole trainload of affable doughboys—arrived in Coblenz.

In their sector of the Rhine, certainly, the Yankees felt quite at home. They were sternly forbidden to wander out of it, for the various bridgeheads were kept as severely separate as watertight compartments, but the outposts could not help meeting occasionally, and on Thursday of last week, when troops that looked hauntingly like our own marched into Bonn, the Yanks discovered to their great delight, that their neighbors below stream were the Canadians.

"Hall, Kennida!"

The exchange of courtesies would run something like this:

"Cheer-o Kennida, what division?"

"The Second."

"Is 'at so? So's this."

"The Second American? Some division, from what they tell us."

"We'll say it is. Where's the British?"

"The Imperials? Oh, down stream somewhere."

"What's your main town?"

"Bonn."

"What kind of a place?"

"Ditto."

"How are things going?"

"Lovely. Just lovely. Couldn't be better, if we were home in the States."

"Home in the States? Where do you get that stuff?"

"Oh, well, I'm from Iowa myself. Half of us are Americans."

"The hell you say. Then, why didn't you come over in our Army?"

"Because it didn't come over soon enough."

A thoughtful silence for a while.

Then:

"Well, see you in Iowa, Kennida."

"Right-o."

Thus it befell that Canada and America crossed the Rhine shoulder to shoulder.

Now the Stars and Stripes float from the skyline flagpole of Ehrenbreitstein.

Ehrenbreitstein sounds rather like the name of some cloak and suit house in New York, but it is really a fortress so formidable that it is called the Gibraltar of the Rhine. If, when they began to fashion it just after Waterloo, any prophetic soul had told the powers that were that a century later its garrison would echo to the tread of soldiers from the absurd, little sapping republic across the Atlantic they would have flung him into its lowest keep as a dangerous lunatic.

The fortress, which copies the old hill-top castles of still the weather-battered ruins still crown down on the Rhine, was reared on the site of just such a stronghold as had stood for centuries there at the junction of the Rhine and Moselle. It is hollowed out from just such a sheer riverside rock as the Lorelei itself. Its vast underground chambers will billet a hundred thousand men. By spiral paths that lead through tunnels and over drawbridges, you reach at last its battlements, which rise full 355 feet above the river bed. From them you can see triangular Coblenz laid out like a relief map at the base of the fortress and survey the historic countryside from Stolzenfels to Andernach.

Ruedeker's account of Ehrenbreitstein is accurate, though vague. It contains what today is a serious error. It says: "Foreign officers are not admitted." Correct this to read "German officers," and the sentence may stand.

From Ehrenbreitstein itself, which is a small town opposite Coblenz, the bridgehead reaches for 30 kilometers into Germany.

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