

**"MADEMOISELLE  
E MISS": LETTERS**

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"Mademoiselle Miss": Letters by Richard C. Cabot

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**RICHARD C. CABOT**

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"Mademoiselle Miss"

LETTERS FROM AN AMERICAN  
GIRL SERVING WITH THE RANK OF  
LIEUTENANT IN A FRENCH  
ARMY HOSPITAL AT  
THE FRONT



WITH A PREFACE BY  
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## PREFACE

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**I**NTIMATE, holy, comforting things stand here and there unharmed in the wrecked villages of France and Belgium,— a crucifix still erect, a sewing-machine, a baby's cradle. This book tells of them. But the record, written "while the instruments are boiling in the sterilizer," is itself one of the most intimate and holy things which have been saved for our comfort out of the whirlpool of embattled Europe. We need the message to keep us sane as we face the horrors of war; even more perhaps to show us the horrors of peace, its awful, silent power to paralyze our faculties,— till they are released by the fight



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against war, by the struggle to save life and to banish despair.

What the writer of these letters did for the wounded in France needs no retelling here. But what her loving care of the wounded did for her, and might have done for many of us, her unawakened fellow countrymen, I will venture to sum up.

Despite her fourteen hours daily labor amid the blood and anguish of the hospital she "begins for the first time in her life to feel as a normal being should." Why? Because so much new vigor has been born in her. Under the divine pressure of necessity she becomes inventive as well as competent. The very tools of her trade are often wanting. Inspirations for constructing them "out of nothing" arise in her.

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Still better inspired she soon becomes the mother, as well as the nurse, of her charges. Her touch is "as light as a watchmaker's"; her strength suffices to carry a sick man in her arms from his bed to the operating-room, and "there shall be a towel for every man or I will go undried." But when at the end of the day she "has stuffed cotton under all the weary backs and plastered limbs," she "bids all my children good night." Later she has them propped on their pillows in anticipation of the Christmas tree she has dressed for them. Again it is one of her "children," dragged back from death by her good nursing, but still only the wan shadow of a man, who "laughs and tries to clench his fist inside the dressings to show me how strong he is."

He laughs,—and that too is her in-

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spiration. "You can't imagine, I suppose, that we laugh and jest all day long. If you can't do that, you may as well get out, for all the good you will ever do a wounded soldier. We ought to be joyous here" (and she can!) "even if men do try to make it a vale of tears; and the more suffering I see the more I think so." How good the gallant laughter sounds across the seas! Surely something of humanity's best is here, not saved from the wreckage but new born of the fiery, fertilizing need.

And with the laughter she brings color and glory too, shaming our drab, peaceful lives. "The sun makes gold patches everywhere, striking through the trophy of flags that I have arranged at the end of the ward, to the great delight of the children."